haters of libertie, champions in earth for the right of Christ, callēgers to the deuill and all his workes, no spirit of sleepe shall muffle your eyes, no fat of selfe will, or ignorance shall couer your heartes, no parasite shall flatter you, in your sinne, no *Lodge*, no playmaker, no Epicure, no Atheiste, shall make you to surfette with these delightes.

Playes are the inuentions of the deuil, the offrings of Idolatrie, the pompe of worldlinges, the blossomes of vanitie, the roote of Apostacy, the foode of iniquitie, ryot, and adulterie, detest them.

Players are maisters of vice, teachers of wantonnesse, spurres to impuritie, the Sonnes of idlenesse, so longe as they liue in this order, loath them. God is mercifull, his winges are spred to receyue you if you come betimes,

God is iust, his bow is bent
& his arrowe drawen,
to sēd you a plague,
if you staye
too longe.

FINIS.

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FINIS.

A ſecond and third blaſt *of retrait from plaies* and Theaters:

the one whereof was ſounded by a re- uerend Byſhop dead long ſince; *the other by a Worſhipful and* zealous Gentleman *now aliue:*

one ſhowing the filthines of plaies in *times paſt*; *the other the abhomination of* Theaters in the time preſent: *both expreſly prouing that that Common-weale is* nigh vnto the curſſe of God, where-*in either plaiers be made of, or* Theaters main-*tained.*

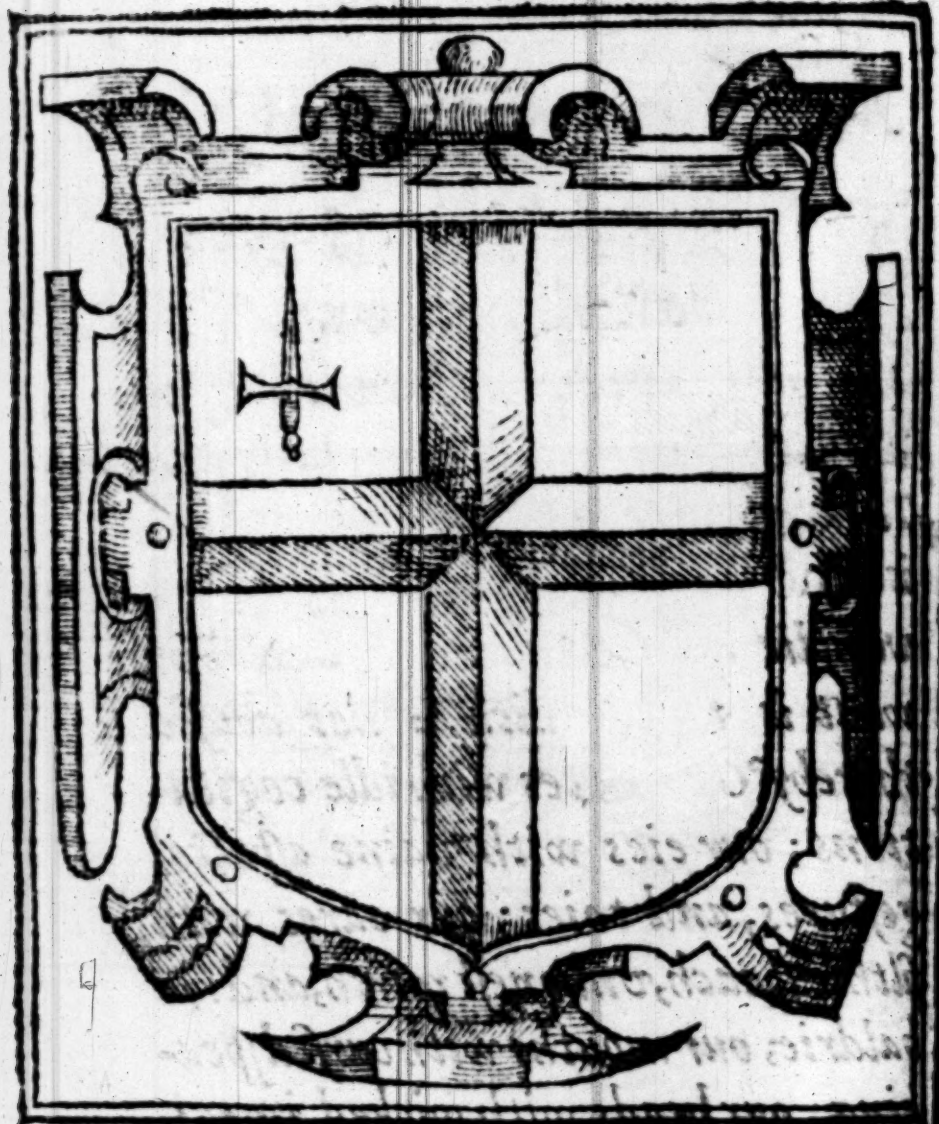
Set forth by Anglo-phile Eutheo.

Epheſ. 5, verſe. 15, 16.

Take heede therefore that ye walke circumſpectlie, not as vnwiſe, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the daies are euil.

Allowed by auctoritie.

1580.



Anglo-phile Eutheo to the Reader, S.

THou hast here, Christian reader, a second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters. The first blast in my compt is The Schoole of abuse: a title not vnfitlie ascribed vnto plaies. For what is there which is not abused thereby? Our hartes with idle cogitations; our eies with vaine aspects, gestures, and toies; our eares with filthie speach, vnhonest mirth, and rebaldrie; our mouths with cursed speaking; our heads with wicked imaginations; our whole bodies to vncleanes; our bodies and mindes to the seruice of the Diuel; our holie daies with prophanes; our time with idle-

Schoole of abuse.

nes; al our blessings, health, wealth, and prosperitie to the increase of Satans kingdome, are there abused: that not vnfitlie they are tearmed, as of late The schoole of abuse, *by one* [a]; The schoole of Bauderie *by another* [b]; The nest of the Diuel, and sinke of al sinne, *by a third* [c], *so long agoe,* The chaire of pestilence, *by Clement Alexandrinus* [d]; *by Cyril* [e], *and Saluianus* [f] The pompe of the Diuel; the soueraigne place of Satan, *by Tertullian* [g].

And albe I cal them, A second and third blast, &c. yet do I not so, as though there were no moe blastes, or dehortations frō them, or inuectiues against them beside. For in al ages the most excellent men for learning haue condemned them by the force of eloquence, and power of Gods worde (as I am to proue vpon anie good occasion offered). But so do I tearme them

[a] M. Gosson in his inuective against plaies, called The Schoole of abuse.

[b] 3. Blast of retrait frō plaies.

[c] M. Spark in his rehersal sermon at Paules crosse, 29. of April. Ann. 1579.

[d] *Clement. Alexand. li. 3. Pedag. cap. 12.*

[e] *Cyril. Catech. 1. Mystagogica.*

[f] 2. blast of retrait frō plaies.

[g] *Tertul. lib. de spectaculis.*

them in respect of the time present wherein none, that I knowe, besides these Autors haue written, though manie, thanked be God, in the principal places of this land haue, and dailie, yea and openlie do speake against plaies and Theaters.

Autor of ỹ second blast.

The former of these two was written in the Latine tong by that reuerend man Saluianus [h] *Bishop of* Massilia, *who for his wonderful eloquence and zeale is called,* Magister Episcoporum, The maister of Byshops, *by* Gennadius [i]; *and that* 1100. *yeeres sithence. VVherebie thou maist gather, first, that it is a most odious, & intolerable thing in a Christian Common-weale, which so learned a Byshop would stand to confute; & secondlie, that to dehort from plaies is no newe thing, being condemned so long ago.*

[h] *Saluianus Massiliensis Episcopus Lib. 6. de gubernat. Dei.*

[i] *Gennadius de illustribus viris.*

The Lord of his infinite mercie grant,

grant, that his blast maie do more good with Englishmen, than it did with the Romans, to which he ſounded the ſame. Otherwiſe I know right wel, that muſt needs betide vs which happened vnto them. For they contemned his ſaiengs, and the warnings of ſuch like good men. Therfore firſt came the foraine enimies, the Gothes *and* Vandales *who ouercame them, and oppreſſed them with moſt grieuous bondage; and afterward they fel into the handes of Satan, who caried them headlong into al impuritie of life, & abomination, vnder which curſe of God they as yet continue. So we, aſſuredlie, vnles we liſten vnto the dehortations of theſe good men, and ſhun plaies, with ſuch like pompes of Satan, the which once we, when it was, before God & his congregation, renounced, ſhal fal into ſome one intolerable plague of God*

God or other, into the handes if not of foraine enimies, which I feare; yet of our ſpiritual aduerſarie, the Pope or Diuel, which I am ſure of.

Touching the Autor of the latter blaſt, thou maiſt coniecture who he was, but I maie not name him at this time for my promiſe ſake: yet this do I ſaie of him, that he hath bine, to vſe his verie wordes, A great affecter of that vaine Art of plaie making, &c. *Yea, which I ad, as excellent an Autor of thoſe vanities, as who was beſt. But the Lord of his goodnes hath called him home; ſo that he did not ſo much delight in plaies in times paſt, but he doth as much deteſt them now, and is hartilie ſorie that euer he was ſuch an inſtrument to ſet vice afloate: as more at large in his diſcourſe, thou maiſt perceaue. VVhereby firſt, note with me, the goodnes of our God toward*

vs,

vs, who seeing that we wil not shun plaies for anie dehortations of his godlie Preachers, who daie by daie in al places of greatest resort denounce the vengeance of GOD to them, be they hie or lowe, that fauor plaies, Theaters, or plaiers, stirreth vp the verie Autors themselues to inueigh against them, that we maie be ashamed any waie to allowe that, which the verie Autors do vtterlie condemne. Secondlie praise God, I beseech you, for bringing this Autor, and Maister Gosson, *who made the Schoole of abuse out of Babylon. And thirdlie praie vnto him, that al makers of plaies maie folowe their example: then sure I am, that both the rude multitude, if not for feare of Gods displeasure, yet because they shal heare nothing but what is stale, will leaue haunting of stinking plaiers, and also plaiers themselues forsake their*

their vnlawful, vngodlie, and abominable exerciſe, for lacke either of Autors, or of auditors.

Loth was the Autor, I muſt needs confeſſe, to haue his worke published, not becauſe he would not haue plaies openlie reproued, which from his hart he wisheth were moſt ſtraightlie forbidden, but through a too too baſe conceipt of his owne worke, thinking that ſome grounded Diuine were more fit to dehort from ſo prophane an exerciſe, than he, whoſe profeſſion (if ſo I maie ſaie) is otherwiſe. But hearing partlie by me, and partlie by others, what a ioie to the children of God, and griefe to the ſeruants of Satan it would be to heare, that he, who was ſo famous an Autor, was now become a religious dehorter from plaies; yea, thinking how the one ſort would with more Zeale auoide them, & the other with more shame

appeare

appeare on ſtage, when they should vnderſtand that al the world knoweth that their exerciſe is neither warranted by Gods worde, nor liked of Chriſtians, but diſalowed vtterly by Scripture, by reaſon, by Doctors, by Byshops, by their verie Autors themſelues, yea and by al other good men, as the enimie to godlines, and the corruption of the wel diſpoſed, and ſo conſequentlie a ſpecial engine both to ſubuert al Religion, and to ouerthrowe the good ſtate of that Common-weale where it is maintained, he altered his minde, and gaue me his booke, wishing me to do therewithal as I thought beſt for the glorie of God, and thy commoditie.

VVhich I haue now, together with the inuectiue of that reuerend Bishop Saluianus, *published, that one of them might showe the abomination of Theaters in the time preſent, and*

and the other how odious they haue ſeemed to the godlie in time paſt, and both allure thee vtterlie to forbid them, if thou be a Magiſtrate of power, and to auoide them more than anie peſtilence, be thou whoſoeuer. VVhich God grant.

A ſecond blaſt of retrait from plaies and Theaters,

ſounded by that reuerend, godlie, and learned Byſhop Saluianus, ſometime Byſhop of Maſſilia, in his ſixt booke De gubernatione Dei.

SVch thinges are committed at plaies and Theaters, as cannot be thought vpon, much leſſe vttered without ſinne. For other vices chalenge their ſeueral portions within vs, as filthie cogitations the minde; vnchaſte aſpects the eies; wicked ſpeech the eares: ſo that when one of theſe doth offend, the reſt may be without fault. But at Theaters none of theſe but ſinneth, for both the mind there with luſt; and the eies with ſhowes; and the eares with hearing be polluted: al which are ſo bad, that no man can wel

report

report or declare them with honeſtie.

For who, without paſſing the boundes of ſhamefaſtnes, can vtter thoſe imitations of vnhoneſt things; that filthie ſpeech; that vile motion, the beaſtlie geſtures, vſed there? The vilenes whereof may be gathered euen by the vnlawfulnes to name them. For ſom ſinnes, though moſt hainous, may wel and honeſtlie both be named, & blamed too, as murder, theft, adulterie, ſacriledge, and ſuch like: onlie the filthines of Theaters are ſuch as may not honeſtlie be no not ſo much as blamed. Such new matter ariſeth againſt the reproouer for finding falt with this moſt horrible filthines; that albeit he be a moſt perfect honeſt man that would ſpeake againſt it, yet can he not ſo doe and keepe his honeſtie.

Againe,

Againe, al other euils pollute the doers onlie, not the beholders, or the hearers. For a man may heare a blasphemer, and not be partaker of his sacriledge, inasmuch as in minde he dissenteth. And if one come while a roberie is a doing, he is cleere, becauſe he abhors the fact. Onlie the filthines of plaies, and ſpectacles is ſuch, as maketh both the actors & beholders giltie alike. For while they saie nought, but gladlie looke on, they al by ſight and aſſent be actors, that trulie may be applied vnto them that saieng of the apoſtle, *How that not onlie they which commit ſuch things are worthie death, but alſo which fauor them that do them.* Rom.1,31.

So that in that repreſentation of whoredome, al the people in mind plaie the whores. And ſuch as happilie came chaſte vnto ſhowes, returne

turne adulterers from plaies. For they plaie the harlots, not then onlie when they go awaie, but also when they come. For as soone as one lusteth after a filthie thing, whiles he hasteneth to that which is vncleane, he becõmeth vncleane.

Now this being so; behold I praie you, what partes either al or almost al *Romans*, doe plaie. And yet, we doing thus, saie we are not regarded of God; we saie GOD hath forsaken vs, when in verie deede we forsake God.

God cannot fauor such as haunt plaies.

For, suppose we, that our Lord wil respect vs, not deseruing his fauor? let vs see if he can. Lo, infinite thousandes of Christians doe dailie abide at the showes of vnseemelie things. Can God then fauor such kinde of persons? Can God cast his gratious countenance vpon such as rage in circles, and plaie

plaie the harlots in Theaters? Or is this our meaning, and doe we thinke it meete, that forsomuch as God seeth vs in circles, and Theaters, that what things we see, he beholdeth; and what filthines we looke on, he seeth it also for companie? For one of these must needes be: for if he vouchsafe to looke vpon vs, it foloweth, that he must beholde al those thinges, where we are: or if, which is most true, he turne awaie his eies from those thinges, he must likewise turne his countenance frō vs who are there. And the case standing thus, yet naie-theles we doe these things which I haue said, and that without cessing.

Or thinke we that God hath his Theaters, and circles, as had the gods of the Gentils? For thus did they in old time, because they

The Diuel delighteth in plaies; God deteſteth them.

were perſuaded their idols delighted in them. But how is it that we doe ſo, who are certaine that our God deteſteth them? Or if wee knowe that this abominatiõ doth pleaſe God, I wil not gaine-ſaie, but wee maie frequent it daie by daie. But if it be in our conſcience, that God abhorreth, that he deteſteth, that God is offended as the Diuel is fed by Theaters; how ſaie we that wee worſhip God in his Church, which ſerue the Diuel alwaies at plaies, and that wittinglie, and willinglie? And what hõpe ſhal we haue with God, who not ignorantlie, or by chance wound him, but after the example of thoſe gigants whome we reade, ful madlie bent themſelues againſt God, and againſt the cloudes. So we through the iniuries which al the world ouer continualie we infer,

fer, doe beate the heauens, as it were, with a common consent.

To Christ therfore, O monsterous madnes! euen to Christ doe we offer plaies and tomblers; yea and that especialie then when we receiue goodnes at his hands, whē we enioie prosperitie through his blessing, or God hath giuen vs victorie ouer the enimies, whereby what else do we show our selues, but euen iniurious to him which hath done vs good; to raile vpon him, who blesseth vs; to strike him ouer the face with a sworde, who louinglie doth kisse vs.

For I aske the mightie and rich men of this world, of what offence is that seruant guiltie, which wisheth il to a good and gratious maister; which raileth on him that deserueth wel; and rendereth despiteful wordes for benefits receiued?

ued? without controuerſie al men wil iudge him a moſt hainous offender, which for good rendreth il to him, to whom indeed he might not yeeld il for euil: euen thus do we, which are called Chriſtians; we ſtir vp againſt vs a merciful God by our vncleannes; we ſtrike a gratious God by our filthines; we wound a louing God by our wickednes.

To Chriſt therefore, ô monſterous madnes! euen to Chriſt doe we offer plaiers and tomblers; to Chriſt we do render for his benefites the filthines of theaters; euen to Chriſt do we ſacrifice the oblations of moſt beaſtlie ſport. As though our Sauior, who for vs became man, taught vs to doe ſo, and had preached the ſame either by himſelfe, or by his Apoſtles; as though that to this end he tooke

vpon

vpon him the ſhame of mans natiuitie, and the contumelious beginnings of an earthlie generation; to that end he laie in a cratch, at what time notwithſtanding the verie Angels miniſtred vnto him; to that ende he would be ſwadled with rags of cloth, who gouerned the heauens in ſimple cloth; to that end he hong on the croſſe, at whoſe hanging the verie world was aſtoniſhed. *VVho being rich,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *for your ſakes became poore, that yee thorough his pouertie might be made rich. And being in the forme of* GOD, *he humbled himſelfe vnto the death, euen the death of the croſſe:* Euen this did Chriſt teach vs when he ſuffered theſe things for our ſakes.

Luk. 2, 12. 13.

2. Cor. 8, 9.

Phil. 2, 6.

Wel do we requite his paſſion, who, receiuing through his death redemption, leade a moſt filthie life.

Tit. 2. 11. life. *For the grace of God that bringeth ſaluation vnto al men hath ap-*
12. *peared,* ſaith bleſſed Paule, *and teacheth vs that wee should denie vngodlines, and worldlie luſtes, and that wee should liue ſoberlie, and righteouſlie, and godlie in this pre-*
13. *ſent world, looking for the bleſſed hope, and appearing of the glorie of*
14. *the mightie God, and of our Sauior Ieſus Chriſt, who gaue himſelfe for vs, that he might redeeme vs from al iniquitie, and purge vs a peculiar people vnto himſelfe, Zealous of good workes.*

Where be they which doe theſe things, for which the Apoſtle ſaith Chriſt came? where be they which flie the deſires of this world? where be they which liue godlie & righteouſlie, that looke for the bleſſed hope by wel doing, and leading a pure life, ſhow thereby that they looke

looke and long for the kingdome of God; where be such?

Our Lord Iesus Christ came, saith he, *that he might purge vs a peculiar people vnto himselfe, zealous of good workes.* Where is that pure people? that peculiar people; that good people, that people of holines? Tit.2, 14.

Christ, saith the Scripture, *suffered for vs, leauing vs an ensample, that we should folow his steps.* And we folow the steps of our Sauior in circles, and in Theaters, we folow the steps of our Sauior: as though our Sauior left vs such an ensample, whome wee read did weepe, but that he laughed, we neuer read. And both these for our sakes, because weeping is a pricking of the hart, laughter the corruption of maners. Therefore said he, *VVoe to you that laugh, for yee shal waile and weepe:* and, *Blessed* 1.Pet.2, 21. Luke.6, 25. 21.

are

are ye that weepe now, for yee shall laugh. But it is not enough for vs to laugh and be merrie, vnles we reioice with ſin and madnes; vnles our laughter be tempered with filthines, & mixed with impietie.

What error, I ſaie, is this, naie what fooliſhnes? Can we not dailie be merrie, and laugh, vnles we make our laughter & mirth to be wickednes? Or els thinke we ſimple mirth to be nothing worth? and can wee not laugh except wee ſinne? what a miſchiefe is this, naie what furie? Let vs laugh, I praie you, yea vnmeaſurablie, and let vs be merrie, yea continualie, ſo we ſinne not. What fooliſhnes, naie madnes is it, to thinke mirth and ioie nothing worth, vnles God be iniuried therebie? yea iniuried, & that moſt hainouſlie?

For in ſhowes there is a certaine

Apo-

Apoſtaſie from the faith; and a deadlie declining from our beliefe, and the heauenlie ſacraments. For what is the firſt profeſsiõ of Chriſtians at their baptiſme? They proteſt they wil renounce the Diuel, and al his workes, his pompes, and vanities. Therefore by our owne confeſsion, ſhowes & pompes are the workes of the Diuel.

To ſee plaies a kind of Apoſtaſie.

How then, ô Chriſtian, doſt thou haunt plaies and Theaters after baptiſme, which thy ſelfe confeſſeſt are the works of the Diuel! Once thou didſt renounce the Diuel and al his ſhowes, wherebie it foloweth, that whiles thou goeſt witting and willinglie vnto common ſpectacles, thou muſt thinke thou returneſt again vnto the Diuel. For thou haſt renoũced both, and didſt confeſſe one of them to be both. So that returning vnto one,

one, thou wenteſt back vnto both. For, thou ſaieſt, I renounce the Diuel, his pompes, ſhowes, and workes. And what afterward? I beleeue, thou ſaieſt, in God the Father almightie, and in Ieſus Chriſt his ſonne. Therefore before we can beleeue in God, the Diuel muſt be renounced. For he beleeueth not in God, who renounceth not the Diuel. So then he forſaketh God, who returnes to the Diuel. But the Diuel is in his pompes & ſhowes, then it foloweth that by returning vnto his pompes wee forſake the faith of Chriſt. Then hereby al the myſteries of the Beliefe are vnloſed; and al which foloweth in the Creede, is weakened, and tottereth. For the building cannot ſtand, if the principal be downe.

Then tel me, ô Chriſtian, how canſt

canſt thou think thy ſelfe to keepe that which folowes in the Creed, when thou haſt loſt the beginning of the ſame? The members without an head be nothing worth; & to their beginning al things haue reſpect; which once being decaied euerie thing goes to wracke. For the roote being gone, either nothing remaines; or if there do, it ſerues to ſmal profit, for without an head nothing can ſtand.

He therefore that thinkes it a light offence to ſee plaies, let him conſider al what we haue ſaid, and he ſhal ſee that in plaies there is deſtruction, and no pleaſure. And what els is it, but to fal into deſtruction, to forgo the beginning of life? For where the fundacion of the Beliefe is ouerthrown, life it ſelfe is deſtroied.

Then againe we muſt needs returne

turne vnto that which we haue often ſaid: what ſuch thing among the barbarous? where be anie ſtages among them, or Theaters? where is the ſinne of manie ſinnes, that is the deſtruction of our hope, and ſaluation? which notwithſtãding if they, being Pagans did vſe, they ſhould erre with leſſe offence of God: becauſe albe ſuch doing were a defiling of the ſight, yet were it not a breaking of the ſacrament.

Pagans might better erect & frequent Theaters than Chriſtians.

But now, what can we ſaie for our ſelues? we hold the beleefe, & we ouerthrowe the beleefe; wee confeſſe the dutie of ſaluation, and alſo denie the ſame. And therefore where is our Chriſtianitie? who, as it ſeemeth, hereunto are baptized, that afterward more hainouſly we might offend? we prefer paſtimes before the Church; we deſpiſe

ſpiſe the Lordes table, and honor Theaters; at a worde, we loue al things, reuerence al things, God alone ſeemeth vile to vs in comparison of other things.

Finalie among the reſt which proue the ſame, this which I now ſaie, doth ſhowe it to be true. For if it fal out, as often it doth, that at one & the ſame time an holie daie be kept, and common plaies proclamed, I demaund, whether do men flock moſt, to the court of God, or to the den of plaies; to the temple, or to Theaters? And what do men heare moſt willinglie, the ſaiengs of the Euangeliſts, or the toies of plaiers; the wordes of life, or the wordes of death; the wordes of Chriſt, or the words of a foole in a plaie? doubtles we loue that beſt, which we prefer. For if the Church keepe anie feaſt on that daie when deadlie

deadlie paſtime is ſhowen, men; ſuch as ſay they are Chriſtians, either come not at al vnto Church; or, if not thinking of plaies they come and heare in the ſame plaies to bee abroad, they leaue the Church. The temple is deſpiſed, to run vnto Theaters; the Church is emptied, the yeard is filled; wee leaue the ſacrament, to feede our adulterous eies with the impure, & whoriſh ſight of moſt filthie paſtime. But forſooth we, whom proſperitie doth mar, muſt do ſomething in the beginning. And therfore ful rightlie ſaith the Lord God vnto vs; *For your vncleannes are yee with deſtruction aboliſhed.* And againe, *The altars of this mirth ſhalbe rooted out.*

But now it maie be anſwered, that in al the townes of the *Romans* plaies be not vſed. True it is, and

and I ad moreouer, that neither be Theaters where in times past they were. For they are not vsed neither at *Magontia*, nor at *Massilia*, because those townes be ouerthrowen, and destroied; They are not vsed at *Agrippina*, for the enimie hath subdued the same; not in *Treuers* that famous towne, because being foure-times subdued, it is now brought to ground; to conclude they are not vsed in most townes both of *France*, and *Spaine*; and therefore wo to vs men, and to our vncleannes; wo to vs, and to our wickednes. What hope is there for Christian people before God? inasmuch as those euils haue neuer ben in *Roman* cities, since they came into the hands of *Barbarians*. Wherby it appeareth that wickednes and impuritie, is proper & peculiar vnto the *Romans*, and their verie

Romans singular wicked.

A goodlie praise of the Romans.

verie nature as it were. For there wickednes doth chieflie raigne, where the *Romans* be.

But haplie this maie seeme a grieuous, and vniust complaint: grieuous indeede, if it be false. But how, thou wilt saie, how can it be otherwise, sithence what we haue said, are done in a few cities of the *Romans*? And most of them are not polluted with this spot of filthines, where although the place and dwelling of ancient error do abide, yet are not those things now done which were in times passed.

It wil be good therefore to consider both these things, that is, both why the places & houses of plaies are yet vp; and yet no plaies vsed. The places and houses of filthines are therefore yet standing, because in them all impure things were wont to be shewen: and now the

vaine

vaine paſtime is not vſed, for that the miſerie of the time, and mens pouertie will not permit. So that it was of their impietie, why in time paſt plaies were frequented, & neceſsitie is the cauſe that they are not now. For the miſerable caſe of the exchequer, & the emptines of the *Romane* treaſurie wil ſuffer no monie to be waſted commonlie vpõ trifling things. And although much is loſt, and caſt as it were vpon the dunghil: yet nothing ſo much can be conſumed, becauſe they haue not wherewithal to do ſo. For ſuch is our inſatiable deſire of filthie pleſure, that we could wiſh to haue more, onlie to laie it vpon this dirte of abhomination. And the thing ſhowes what we would prodigalie conſume, if we were rich, when we waſt ſo much being in ſo poore a ſtate. For this

is the ſpot, and miſerie of the preſent time, that although through pouertie we cannot, yet through our impietie we would conſume much.

There is no cauſe then why we ſhould deceaue our ſelues, in ſaieng that in al cities thoſe things are not, which were before done. For therefore they are not in this time vſed, becauſe the townes where they were vſed, are not to be ſeene: and where they haue a long time bene vſed, there is not to bring it to paſſe: as God himſelfe ſpeaketh vnto ſinners by the prophet, *And it aſcended vpon his harte, and the Lord could beare it no longer: for the wickednes of your ſtudies, and for the abhominations which you haue committed, and your land is brought into deſolation, into barrennes, and accurſed.*

fed. This is the cauſe then whie the maior part of the *Romane* empire is brought into deſolation, into barrennes, and accurſed.

And would to God they were onlie done in times paſt, and not now in theſe daies, happelie then, as it is written, God would be merciful to our ſinnes. But we take not the waie to haue Gods fauor. For vnceſſantlie we ad ſinne to ſin, & heape wickednes vpon wickednes, that as the better part of vs are deſtroied, ſo we maie al come to nought.

For, I demand, who ſeeth another ſlaine before his face, and is not afraide? who beholdeth his neighbors houſe on fire, and wil not by al meanes prouide for the ſalfetie of his owne? wee do not onlie ſee our neighbors to burne, but alſo are ſet on fire our ſelues

from the chiefeſt part of our bodies. And, ô abomination! what a miſchiefe is this? we burne, we burne, yet dread we not the fire wherwith we burne. For, as I ſaid, the cauſe why thoſe things which before time were vſed, are not now done, is to be aſcribed to the miſerie we are in, not to anie diſcipline or good order which we haue.

Finalie, I doe eaſilie prooue the ſame. For make the time as it was, and forthwith al things ſhalbe as they were in thoſe daies. Yea moreouer, as touching the deſire of men, though thoſe things are not euerie where, yet in reſpect of their minds euerie where they be. For the *Romans* would haue them vſed euerie where. For when neceſsitie onlie makes an euil thing to be left vndone, the verie deſire of

of a filthie thing is condemned in ſuch ſort as if it were done. For, as I ſaie, according to the wordes of our Sauior, *VVhoſoeuer looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adulterie with her alreadie in his harte*: whereby we maie gather, that albe we leaue things filthie & damnable vndone, and that onelie through neceſsitie; yet becauſe our wil is good to haue them, wee are guiltie of condemnation. Matt. 5, 28.

And what ſpeake I of wil? when almoſt euerie where thoſe things are committed. For what ſtranger ſoeuer commeth either to *Rauenna*, or to *Rome*, ſhal finde a part of the *Romans* at ſhowes; and a part of the *Rauenians* at Theaters. And although anie be either abſent, or diſtant by place, yet is he not excuſed thereby. For as manie

as

as are ioined togither in likenes of affection, are guiltie alike of the ſame wickednes which either do commit.

Yet for al this wee flatter our ſelues of our good behauior; wee flatter our ſelues of the rarenes of impuritie. But I ſay yet more, that not onelie thoſe foule ſpots of infamous plaies are yet to be ſeene as afore time; but alſo be more abominablie ſet forth, than euer they were. For in thoſe daies euerie part of the *Romane* empire was in health and ſound; the riches of other townes made the common barnes to be large & big; citizens did abound in wealth and pleaſure, ſo that it was verie hard in ſuch aboundance of al things, for religion to continue pure, and manners vncorrupt. Then euerie where Autors of filthie pleaſure

were

were cheriſhed ; for in al places men were fat. No man waide the charge of the Common-weale, no man feared to come behind hand; for expenſes was not perceaued. The Common-weale after a ſort did ſeeke where, and how to waſt wealth, hauing almoſt no place to keepe it. And therefore heapes of wealth, euen wel nigh aboue meaſure, were conſumed vpon vaine things.

But now what maie be ſaid? old aboundance is gone, gone is the wealth which once we had. Poore wee are, yet ceaſe wee not to be vaine. And whereas pouertie doth reclaime prodigal and prodigious pupils, ſo that when their wealth is gone, they leaue wickednes : we ſhowe our ſelues a newe kind of pupils and vnthriftes, who lacking wealth wil not leaue wickednes.

Whereby

Whereby it appeareth, that the cauſe of our wickednes, is not in the inticements, as of other men, but in our hartes : and that our mindes, is our wickednes; that in deede not by the taking awaie of riches, but through the deſire of euil things we ſinne.

And although we haue hitherto recited manie vices of the *Romans*, which the barbarous people are not polluted withal : yet are there manie mo, which I wil now ad. But firſt this I warne you by the waie, that you account no kind of ſinne light, which tendeth vnto the diſhonor of God. For if no man maie diſhonor him that is noble and mightie; but if he do ſo he is made to anſwere it where he would not, and condemned by lawe: how much more hainous is that offence, whereby the glorie of

of God is defaced? For alwaies the fault doth increaſe, according to the worthines of him that is iniuried. Becauſe by how much the perſon is greater that ſuffereth reproch, by ſo much is he faultie that doth the ſame. Whereof it is which wee read in the lawe, that they which to mans thinking did but lightlie offend, were moſt ſeuerelie for al that puniſhed: which was to giue vs to vnderſtand that nothing, which concerneth God, ſhould be lightlie accounted of: & that that which man eſteemed a ſmal offence, becauſe it was committed againſt the glorie of God, was a moſt grieuous crime.

Exod. 31, verſe. 13. 14.

Nomb. 20, verſe. 25. 26, &c.

Nomb. 25, verſe. 4. 9.

1. Chr. 13, verſe. 9. 10.

To be ſhort, *Vzza* that Leuite of the Lord, what did he contrarie vnto the commandement of God, when he aſſaied to keepe vp the Arke of God from falling? no precept

Vzza.

cept was there by lawe to forbid him ; yet while he held vp the ſame, preſently through the wrath of God he died: not becauſe he had done anie thing rebelliouſlie, or at leaſtwiſe not dutifullie, but by ſhowing dutie he prooued vndutiful, for taking more vpon him than he was commanded.

Gathering of ſtickes. Nomb. 15, verſe. 32. 35. 36. That man among the people of Iſrael, that had gathered ſtickes vpon the Sabboth daie, died the death, and that by the iudgement, and commandement of God, euen the moſt gratious and mercifull iudge, who out of doubt had rather pardon than kil, had not the conſideration of ſeueritie preuailed ouer his mercie. For one raſh felowe periſhed, that manie afterward through raſhnes might not periſh.

And what ſhould I ſpeake of each

each particular man? The whole nation of the Iewes traueling thorough the wildernes, becauſe they luſted after their wonted meate, loſt a part of their people. Yet was there no cõmandement that they ſhould not luſt, but God, as I ſuppoſe, would prouide afore hand for the due obſeruation of the moral law, by reſtraining their rebellious concupiſcence: euen that al the people might the more eaſilie confeſſe, how earneſtlie they ſhould auoid thoſe things, which God in his holie Scripture ſhould forbid, when they were puniſhed for that, which as yet they were not forbidden. Nomb. 11, verſe. 4. 31. 32. 33. Pſa. 78, 30. 31.

The ſame people alſo complained that they tooke ſuch paines, for which cauſe the Lord plagued them from heauen: not becauſe a man oppreſſed with labor might not

not complaine; but for that therebie they ſhowed themſelues vnthankful towards GOD, making God, as it were, the Autor of their immoderate buſines. Wherby we maie gather, how zelouſlie hee ought to ſerue God, which enioieth proſperitie, when as he maie not complaine being in aduerſitie.

But perchance, ſome wil ſaie, whereto ſerues al this? whether to? doubtles, that we ſhould count nothing a ſmal thing, which hurteth the glorie of God. We ſpeake of common plaies, the verie mockerie of religion, and the toies of our life. For while wee plaie at Theaters and ſtages, we are rauiſhed with the loue therof, according to that in the holie Scripture, *It is a paſtime for a foole to do wickedlie.* And ſo, in laughing at filthie and abhominable thinges, we commit wicked-

Plaies the mockerie of religion.

Prou. 10, verſe. 23.

wickednes: & thoſe no ſmal ſins, but therefore the more damnable: becauſe though they ſeeme ſmal at the firſt ſight, yet are they moſt peſtilent in the end. For inaſmuch as there be two moſt notorious euils, as when a man either ſlaieth himſelfe, or defaceth the glorie of God, both they are done in common plaies. For at plaies both the euerlaſting ſaluation of Chriſtian people is quite extinguiſhed thorough wicked filthines, & the maieſtie of God violated, through ſacrilegious ſuperſtition. For it is certaine that it offendeth God, being conſecrated to idols.

Two moſt notorious offences cõmitted by frequenting plaies.

For *Minerua* in ſchooles of exerciſe, *Venus* at Theaters, *Neptune* at circles, in the field *Mars*, *Mercurie* at wreſtling places is adored, & had in honor: and ſo, according to the qualitie of the Autors, ſuperſtition

ſtition doth encreaſe.

Al vncleanes is ſhowed at plaieng; al luxurioufnes at wreſtling; at tumbling al vnſhamefaſtnes; al madnes in caues. Vncleannes is one where; wantonnes anotherwhere; anotherwhere intemperancie; and madnes anotherwhere: but the Diuel is euerie where; yea in euerie particular place where plaies be, are al the ſortes of Diuels. For they gouerne thoſe places which are dedicated vnto them. And therefore the onelie inticement is not there, nor wickednes onelie in ſuch ſpectacles, or ſhowes. For it is a kind of ſacriledge beſide for a Chriſtian to be at ſuch ſuperſtition; becauſe he taketh part with their idolatrie, whoſe feaſts he is delighted withal.

The which albeit alwaies it hath bene a lamentable thing: yet then

is

is it moſt intollerable, when as beſides the cuſtomable vſe of life, either our aduerſitie, or proſperitie doth make it the more hainous. And that becauſe God in aduerſitie ſhould be the more pacified, & leſſe offended in proſperitie. For Gods fauor ſhould be ſought for when he is angrie; and when he is merciful, he ſhould not be diſhonored. For we fall into aduerſitie through the diſpleaſure of God; and by his fauor, we enioie proſperitie.

Proſperitie abuſed.

But we doe al things cleane otherwiſe. How ſo? doe you aske? marke what I ſaie. And firſt when God being intreated of his owne mercie (for wee do neuer ſo liue, that we can deſerue to haue him entreated) but, as I ſaie, when God hath entreated himſelfe, and giuen vs a peaceable time, great encreaſe,

a rich tranquillitie, and ſtore of al thinges more than we can deſire; then we ſo corrupt our ſelues with ſuch proſperitie, and ſo defile our liues with wickednes, that we vtterlie forget both GOD and our ſelues. And whereas the Apoſtle

1.Tim. 2, verſe. 2. ſaith, that *The frute of peace which God doth ſend, conſiſteth in this, that we should lead a peaceable and quiet life in al godlines, and honeſtie:* we vſe the ſame as though God gaue it to the end, that we ſhould liue in al drōkennes, in al riotouſnes, in naughtines, in theft, and in al wickednes and diſhoneſtie: as though the benefite of peace giuen, were leaſure to do wickedlie; and wee ſhould take the truce of tranquillitie at Gods hand the more licentiouſlie, and ſecurelie to ſinne.

Therefore wee are vnworthie Gods gifts, which vſe the benefits of

of God ſo wickedly. We make the occaſion of good workes, to be onlie the matter of wickednes. Wherebie commeth to paſſe, that peace it ſelfe is againſt vs. For ſo we deale, that better it were for vs to be without that thing whereby we proue the worſe.

Who would thinke it? we change the courſe of things by our wickednes; and what God of his mercie made good, we make the ſame il for vs, through our vile behauior, &c.

It remaineth that we now proue that neither the giftes nor allurements of God do better vs one iote. And what are they? what, but euen our peace, quietnes, & tranquillitie which we enioie according to our wiſh and deſire. Wherfore becauſe the matter doth ſo require, let vs vtter ſome ſpecial thing.

Then, as often as we are in feare, in affliction, in perils; when either cities with enimies are beſieged, or countries by inuaſion or anie other aduerſitie are waſted: then we beate the members of a Common-weale, and by praier cal for the aſsiſtance of God: If by the aide of God either townes be ſaued, or ſpoile and pilling hath an end; or the hoſt of enimies foiled; & al feare through the bleſsing of God is taken awaie, what do wee ſtraight after al theſe ehings? I beleeue we endeuor to requite the benefits that we haue receiued frō our Lord God with ſeruing, honoring, and reuerencing his holie Name. (For this followeth, & experience doth prooue, that they who are thankefull get moe benefits, and they are bleſſed with moſt ample and freſh rewardes that requite

quite good turnes.

So happelie we do,& requiting our GOD at leaſtwiſe after the māner of men,we render good for his benefites,that is, we forthwith make recourſe vnto the houſe of the Lord, throwe our ſelues vpon the ground, praie vnto him with ioie and teares together, ſet forth the temple with our gifts, and beſtow rewards. And becauſe thorough his gift we are made merrie, we ſhowe the ſignes of our ioie in his temples,or leaſt wiſe,which he likes as wel, we renounce the former wickednes of our life,ſlaie the ſacrifices of good workes, and for newe conſolations we offer the ſacrifice of a new conuerſation,finalie we proclaime an holie warre againſt al vncleannes, ſhun the madnes of ſtages, abhor the filthines of plaies,promiſe a new life to

the Lord, and finalie for the attainement of his perpetual protection we offer vp our ſelues wholie vnto God.

Now, foraſmuch as theſe things which we haue mẽtioned, ſhould be done for Gods benefites newlie extended vpon vs, let vs conſider what is done. Wee run forthwith vnto plaies, we flie vnto madnes, the people diſperſe themſelues in Theaters, the whole multitude reuel it out at ſtages. He beſtoweth good thinges vpon vs, that wee ſhould be good; we contrariewiſe when we haue receaued good, encreaſe our wickednes; He by his benefites calleth vs vnto godlines, we therby fal to ſin; He by his gifts allureth to repentãce, we ruſh vnto vncleannes; He calleth vnto puritie of life, we folowe filthines.

Thus we wel requite him for his libe-

liberalitie, we do wel either acknowledge, or honor him for his giftes, who as greatlie do recompenſe him with iniuries, as he hath mercifullie bleſt vs with benefits.

FINIS.

A third blaſt of retrait from plaies and Theaters, *showing the abhomination* of them in the time preſent.

KNowlege makes her ſeate & abode in the mindes of thoſe men, who are neither addicted to their owne opinion; nor

nor yet carried awaie with euerie likelihood of troth. For as he that is vnwilling to heare, is fartheſt from knowledge: ſo he that is carried awaie with euerie likelihood, before he haue waded far & deeplie in the cauſe, ſhal prooue but ſlender of iudgement. But he who wil neuer be ſatiſfied with reaſon maie rightlie be counted obſtinate and peruerſe; and without reaſon to be perſuaded commeth either of ſimplicitie, or compulſion.

I write this to none other end but to ſhowe, that as I ought not, being wedded too much to mine owne opinion, to be caried to the defence of a wrong cauſe: ſo it beſeemeth me not to be ouerlightlie miſled vnto error through the cenſure of thoſe, whoſe bare affirming or denial ſerue onelie to maintaine, but not to prooue; for that

that men are not to be ſatiſſied with wordes, but with reaſon. Which if I maie be, I wil not be counted a peruerſe wrangler, but francklie wil condeſcend into the opinion of the wiſe: otherwiſe am to be pardoned though I ſtand erneſt and ſtiffe againſt that which is contrarie to virtue; diſagreing from good religion; furtheſt from ciuilitie, and maie neither by argument of reaſon, nor power of learning be defended.

Such doubtles is mine opinion of common plaies, vſual ieſting, and riming extempore, that in a Chriſtian-weale they are not ſufferable. My reaſon is, becauſe they are publike enimies to virtue,& religion; allurements vnto ſinne; corrupters of good manners; the cauſe of ſecuritie and careleſnes; meere brothel houſes of Bauderie;

derie; and bring both the Goſpel into ſlander; the Sabboth into contempt; mens ſoules into danger; and finalie the whole Commonweale into diſorder.

Great and hainous ſpeeches, no doubt: yet not ſo hainous, as the exerciſe of them is odious; biting wordes, yet not ſo bitter as the cauſe requireth.

It were il painting the Diuel like an Angel, he muſt be portraied forth as he is, that he maie the better be knowen. Sinne hath alwaies a faire cloake to couer his filthie bodie. And therefore he is to be turned out of his caſe into his naked ſkin, that his naſtie filthie bodie, and ſtinking corruption being perceaued, he might come into the hatred and horror of men. For as we are naturalie of our ſelues euil and corrupt: ſo are we naturalie giuen

giuen to loue our ſelues, and to be blinded with our owne affections, inſomuch that, what we knowe to be euil, we are not aſhamed either openlie to defend, or ſlilie to cloake.

The excuſe of wickednes is but the increaſe of puniſhment; & an il cauſe defended by auctoritie, & maintained by learning, brinnges Magiſtrates into ſlander, and learning into contempt.

This I ſpeake, for that I knowe thoſe afore-ſaid do want neither countenance to vphold, nor yet ſkil to defend them. But yet, vnder correction, an euil cauſe maintained is nearetheles euil; &, as pitch defiles the toucher thereof, be he neuer ſo cleane: ſo the virtuous bring their life into queſtion either by ſufferãce, or maintenance of euil. For who wil not iudge but what

what a mans allowes in another, he commendes in himſelfe?

I therefore with reuerence not as a teacher, but as a wel-willer both to the noble and learned, would wiſhe them with *Adrian* the Emperor to ſuffer no paſtime, that maie bring them to vanitie; nor to frequent that recreation, which tendes either to the hurt of a Common-weale, or to the ouerthrowe of religion.

It is true that one opinion maie be contrarie to another; and that for the diſliking of one, or two the qualitie of plaieng were not to be laide of, being ſo highlie eſteemed of al ſortes of men, for that euerie man conceaueth of the goodnes or badnes of a thing according as it ſeemeth in his owne opiniō. And therefore the thing which they diſcommend, maie be both liked, and

and allowed.

I confeſſe the iudgement of one or two is not to be allowed in ſuch caſes: neuertheles the opinions of the rude multitude are not alwais the ſoundeſt, which are mooued with vnconſtant motions, whereby manietimes they like of that which is moſt hurtful; and diſlike that which is moſt profitable: becauſe the one pleaſeth their humors, and the other reſtraineth their affections. The cenſure therfore of them who carie beſt groūd from Gods worde; and is moſt agreeable to reaſon, moſt profitable for the Cōmon-weale; leaſt hurtful to our brethren; and tending alwaie to the reformation of abuſe, is ſooneſt to be allowed, and followed.

Then whether this my iudgement to be admitted or no, as being

ing the ſoundeſt, & reſpecting the benefit of this our countrie, I leaue it to the iudgement of the godlie wiſe, and learned. And that I maie ſeeme to write nothing without ground, or to finde fault without cauſe, I wil, GOD to freend, ſet downe nothing to prooue mine aſſertion good, but what Scripture ſhal warrant, examples confirme, reaſon allowe, and preſent experience ratifie.

Which mine arguments, if anie by more colour of truth can ouerthrowe, I am readie to recant, and to allowe that for good, which I can yet but condemne as wicked, and thinke of al other to be the moſt intolerable abuſe in our Cō-mon-weale. For otherwiſe I cannot thinke, vnles I be conſtrained, as *Petrarch* ſaith, to iudge by other mens iudgements; which who ſo doth,

doth, iudgeth not of himſelfe, but reportes the opinion of others.

Manie run on their courſes verie vainelie til it pleaſe God to cal them home by the Spirit of his grace vnto amendment of life. For when it ſhal pleaſe him to touch the conſcience of the wicked with repentance, the whole ſtate of their life doth alter from that it was before: as maie appeare in S. Paule at his conuerſion. And aſſuredlie the Lord doth ſuffer vs manie times to run paſt our ſelues, that when he hath called vs home, we maie become examples of virtue and godlines vnto others.

I confeſſe that ere this I haue bene a great affecter of that vaine art of Plaie-making, inſomuch that I haue thought no time ſo wel beſtowed, as when my wits were exerciſed in the inuention of thoſe

The Autors former ſtudie; and life.

thoſe follies; I might ſcarſelie with patience heare anie man ſpeake, weare he neuer ſo learned & godlie, that thought to perſuade me from them. So far was I from receiuing of their good and godlie admonitions, that I ſtopped mine eares, and hardened mine harte againſt their counſaile. Such is our peeuiſh nature; we can like of nothing which doth diſlike vs, or ſeemeth contrarie to our vaine opinions. And therfore it is God onlie, that muſt turne our mindes, otherwiſe wee ſhal neuer diſcerne profitable from hurtful things. For albe we haue ſome about vs who counſaile vs the beſt, & ſeeke our profit: yet for al that our nature is ſo peruerſe & froward, that what is wel ſaid wil take no place. This found I by my ſelfe, & this I now perceaue to be in others: but the

Lordes

Lordes purpoſe is good in al his dealings.

It might haue bene ſaid of me then, as it was written of the wicked, that they *conſidered not the waies of the Lord*, but after when it pleaſed God of his mercie to cal mee to the reading of his worde, and diligent ſtudie of the Scriptures, I began to loath my former life, and to miſlike my owne doings; and I was no ſooner drawen with an hartie deſire to returne vnto the Lorde, but I found my ſelfe ſtrengthened with his grace vnto good deſires. For the Lord neuer faileth them that ſeeke him. Aſſuredlie his promiſe can neuer deceaue men, but when they knock, the gate ſhalbe opened vnto them; and when thy ſeeke, they ſhal find. There is nothing

Hereby learne thou, good Reader, how to ſhun not onelie the vanitie of plaies, but al other vanities, after the example of the Autor, who by diligent reading the holie Scriptures, and repentance fel into an vtter deteſtation of plaies.

Luke.11,9.

What God requireth at our hands.

thing more required in vs, than a readie desire of wel doing, who no doubt, being trulie ingrafted in our minds, shalbe so watered with the dewe of Gods holie spirit, that it wil increase and growe vp in vs to a more ful grouth and perfection.

When I came to a streit examination of my life, which I had vainelie consumed in those exercises; and that I began to cal mine old doings into question, and to trie them by the true tuch of Gods word, I found what I counted for gold to be but drosse, vile, and of none account, hauing the properties to make their fauorers of their owne nature.

Plaies cannot abide the truth of Gods word;

Vaine plaies make vaine folkes.

Then to the end that others should not be deceaued with that wherewith my selfe was ouertaken, I thought it my part to laie open to al mens eies the horrible abuse

The ende why this booke was made.

abuſe aſwel of plaies as of the Inactors, & the diſorder of their Auditorie; that the abuſe being perceaued, euerie man might reforme himſelfe, & be weaned from their wickednes; or otherwiſe, that the Magiſtrats being informed might take ſuch good waies, that the intolerable exerciſe of plaies might be vtterlie put downe. For I am verilie perſuaded, that if they may be permitted ſtil to make ſale of ſinne, we ſhal pul on our heads Gods vengeance, & to our realme bring an vtter confuſion.

What I ſhal ſpeake of the abuſe by plaies of my owne knowledge, I know maie be affirmed by hundreds, to whome thoſe matters are as wel knowen as to my ſelfe. Some citizens wiues, vpon whom the Lord for enſample to others hath laide his hands, haue euen on

Frutes of plaies for the Diuels owne mouth

their death beds with teares confeſſed, that they haue receiued at thoſe ſpectacles ſuch filthie infections, as haue turned their minds from chaſt cogitations, and made them of honeſt women light huſwiues; by them they haue diſhonored the veſſels of holines; and brought their huſbandes into contempt, their children into queſtiō, their bodies into ſicknes, and their ſoules to the ſtate of euerlaſting damnation.

1.Cor. 6, verſe. 19. 20.

He that toucheth pitch wilbe defiled.

Such is the nature and inclination of vs al, that we run whether affection leades vs, and are withdrawen by companie. And therefore, as Dauid ſaith, *VVith the godlie thou wilt showe thy ſelfe godlie; with the vpright man thou wilt showe thy ſelfe vpright. VVith the pure thou wilt shewe thy ſelfe pure, and with the froward, thou wilt showe*

2.Sam. 22, verſe. 26. 27. Pſa.18, 25. 26.

showe thy ſelfe froward.

The repaire of them that are honeſt to thoſe places of euil reſort, makes their owne good life to be doubted of; for that the place breedes ſuſpicion aſwel of good, as of bad. For who can ſee man or woman reſort to an houſe which is notoriouſlie wicked, but wil iudge them to be of the crewe of the wicked and vngodlie? *Auoid ſuſpected places.*

The moſt honeſt wife, is the ſooneſt aſſalted, and hath ſuch ſnares laid to entrap her, as, if God aſsiſt her not, ſhe muſt needes be taken. *The beſt ſooneſt tempted.*

When I gaue my ſelfe firſt to note the abuſe of common plaies, I found mine harte ſore ſmitten with ſorowe (ſinne did there ſo abound & was ſo openlie committed, that I looked when God in iuſtice would haue preſentlie in *Horrible ſinnes openlie committed at Theaters.*

his wrath haue cõfounded the beholders.) The Theater I found to be an appointed place of Bauderie; mine owne eares haue heard honeſt women allured with abhominable ſpeeches. Sometime I haue ſeene two knaues at once importunate vpon one light huſwife, whereby much quarel hath growen to the diſquieting of manie. There ſeruants, as it is manifeſtlie to be prooued, haue conſented to rob their maiſters, to ſupplie the want of their harlots; there is the practiſing with married wiues to traine them from their huſbands, and places appointed for meeting and conference.

Marke this, ô yee fauorers, frequeters, & vpholders of plaies.

When I had taken a note of al theſe abuſes, & ſawe that the Theater was become a conſultorie houſe of Satan, I concluded with my ſelfe, neuer to imploie my pen to

Who can fauor plaies when the Autors thẽſelues abhor them.

to ſo vile a purpoſe, nor to be an inſtrument of gathering the wicked togither.

It maie ſeeme I am ouer lauiſh of ſpeech; and that which I haue publiquelie expreſſed of others by mine owne knowledge might haue bene diſſembled. But I haue learned that he who diſſembles the euil which he knowes in other men, is as giltie before God of the offence, as the offenders thẽſelues. And the Lord hath expreſlie commanded in *Exodus*, that *we ſhould not folowe a multitude to do euil, neither agree in a controuerſie to decline after many, and ouerthrowe the truth.* I cannot therefore but reſiſt ſuch wickednes, leaſt I might ſeeme to maintaine them. For he that diſſembles vngodlines is a traitor to God. Exod. 23, verſe. 2.

Since therefore that the cauſe is Gods,

Gods, I dare preſſe forth my ſelfe to be an Aduocate againſt Satan vnto the rooting out of ſinne. For I am fully reſolued in Gods truth, to build ſo ſtrong and ſure a fundation againſt theſe ſellers, & ſetters forth of ſinne, as neither they, nor their adherents ſhal euer be able to ouerthrowe. And my truſt is that the godlie wil ioine with me to the ſuppreſsing of thoſe which fight againſt his worde, waging their battel on the Sabboth daie the more conuenientlie to deſtroie the ſoules of the children of God.

The cauſe is generalie to be defended, for that the contention of the Aduerſaries is about religion, and therefore none can be diſcharged for bare ſaieng they conſent not to the wicked. For it is the part of euerie true ſoldier of Ieſus Chriſt

Chriſt with al power to withſtand,& reſiſt ſuch as offer wrong to the maieſtie of GOD,by hindering the ſeruice which we owe vnto him. We are to be enimies vnto the death againſt thoſe vpholders of wickednes;and neuer to giue ouer the battel in ſo holie, & iuſt a quarel.

We ſee the wicked are alwaies readie to maintaine euil cauſes, & in theſe daies the worſt men ſhal find bearers,and bolſterers, and be ſupported by thoſe,who by iuſtice are to ſuppreſſe them,or at leaſt to reforme their abuſes,which are intolerable. If the wicked lurke together to vphold their lewdenes, how much more ought the faithful to ioine themſelues together to plucke downe vanitie!

I knowe my ſelfe a worme of al other the weakeſt to medle in theſe

theſe caſes: yet ſuch is my deſire to ouerthrowe their wickednes, that I dare, inflamed with the holie zeale of *Dauid* in the quarel of God, vnprouided both of armor and weapon, with one poore ſling reſiſt the ſtrength of their hugeſt Champion, and endure the brunt of his fierce aſſalts; doubting not but to finde ſome that wil ſtande with me to ouerthrowe the enimies of GOD, and to pul downe thoſe flags of defiãce, which Satan hath ſet vp againſt the preaching of the Goſpel to the decaie of the Church.

Let vs delaie no time, deere brethren, their doings are abhominable in the ſight and eares of God, and condemned of the righteous: if therefore ſentence againſt their euil workes be not executed ſpeedelie, *The hartes of the children of men,*

men, as Eccleſiaſtes ſaith, *wilbe fullie ſet in them to do euil.* Eccl. 8, 11.

If there were nothing to moue you, but the breach of Gods commandement, it were great cauſe to ſtir vp your godlie furie, and zeale to diſcommend plaies vtterlie: but their abuſes ſtretching further into the Common-wealth, are by ſufferance growen ſo huge, that it is hard dealing with them as againſt foes; for they are become priuate freends. They are therfore to be delt withal by degrees. For it is verie hard to roote out that frō our hartes, be it neuer ſo great an abuſe, wherof we haue conceaued a good opinion.

Plaies do not onelie hinder the Goſpel, but hurte the Common-weale.

Waies how to ſuppreſſe plaies.

Let therefore the Magiſtrate but repel them from the libertie of plaieng on the Sabboth daie. For that is the abuſe which is generalie found fault withal, & allowed of

The Magiſtrates dutie in ſuppreſſing plaies.

of none but thoſe who are altogether deſtitute of the feare of God, and without conſcience. To plaie on the Sabboth is but a priuiledge of ſufferance, and might with eaſe be repelled, were it throughlie followed. The warrant which Magiſtrats haue to forbid plaies is great, and paſſed vnto them by ſuch a Prince, whoſe auctoritie is aboue al auctories of earthlie gouernors.

Exo. 20, 8. 9. 10. 11. God hath giuen vs an expreſſe commandement that wee ſhould not violate the Sabboth daie; and preſcribed an order how it ſhould be ſanctified, namelie in holines, by calling into minde the ſpiritual reſt; hearing the worde of GOD; and ceſsing from worldlie buſines. Wherevpon *Iſaiah* the Prophet ſhowing how the ſabboth ſhould be obſerued, ſaith, *If thou turne away thy foote from the Sabboth, from doing*

Workes which God requireth on the Sabboth.

Eſaie. 58, verſe. 13.

doing thy wil on mine holie daie, & cal the Sabboth a delite, to conſecrate it, as glorious to the Lord, and shalt honor him, not doing thine owne waies, nor ſeeking thine owne wil, nor ſpeaking a vaine worde, then Eſa.58, 14. *shalt thou delite in the Lord, and I wil cauſe thee to mount vpon the hie places of the earth, and feede thee with the heritage of Iaakob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.*

Here we ſee how the Lord requireth that this daie ſhould be obſerued; and what reſt he looketh for at our hands. But, alas, how do we followe the order which the Lord hath ſet downe! Is not the Sabboth of al other daies the moſt abuſed? which of vs on that daie is not carried whether his affection leades him vnto al diſſolutenes of life? How often do wee vſe on that

How the Sabboth daie is conſumed.

that daie vnreuerend ſpeeches? which of vs hath his hart occupied in the feare of God? who is not led awaie to the beholding of thoſe ſpectacles, the ſight whereof can bring but confuſion both to our bodies and ſoules?

* At plaies.

Are not our eies (there ⋆) carried awaie with the pride of vanitie? our eares abuſed with amorous, that is lecherous, filthie, and abhominable ſpeech? Is not our tong, which was giuen vs onelie to glorifie God withal, is not our tong there imploied to the blaſpheming of Gods holie Name; or the commendation of that is wicked? Are not our hartes through the pleaſure of the fleſh; the delight of the eie; and the fond motions of the mind, withdrawen from the ſeruice of the Lord, & meditation of his goodnes?

Euerie mẽber of man defiled at plaies.

So

So that albe it is a ſhame to ſaie it, yet doubtles whoſoeuer wil mark with what multitudes thoſe idle places are repleniſhed,& how emptie the Lordes ſanctuarie is of his people,may wel perceaue what deuotion we haue. We maie wel ſaie, wee are the ſeruants of the Lord: but the ſlender ſeruice wee do him, and the ſmal regard we haue of his commandements, declares our want of loue towardes him. For, *If yee loue me*, ſaith Christ, *keepe my commandements*. We maie wel be hirelings, but we are none of his houſhold. Iohn. 14, verſe. 15.

Wherfore abuſe not ſo the Sabboth daie, my brethren, leaue not the temple of the Lord; ſit not ſtil in the quagmire of your owne luſtes: but put to your ſtrength to helpe your ſelues, before your owne waight ſinke you downe to hel.

Eph. 5, 16. hel. *Redeeme the time, for the daies are euil.*

Alas, what folie is in you, to purchaſe with a penie damnation to your ſelues? why ſeeke yee after ſinne, as after a banket? None delight in thoſe ſpectacles, but ſuch as would be made ſpectacles. Account not of their droſſe; their treſures are too baſe to be laied vp in the rich coafers of your minde. Repentance is furtheſt from you, when you are neareſt ſuch maie-games. Al of you, for the moſt part, do leeſe the time, or rather wilfulie caſt the ſame awaie; contemning that as nothing, which is ſo pretious as your liues cannot redeeme.

None delight in cõmon ſpectacles, but ſuch as would be ſpectacles.

I would to God you would beſtowe the time you conſume in thoſe vanities in ſeeking after virtue, & glorie. For to ſpeake trulie, whatſoeuer

Time would not be loſt.

whatſoeuer is not conuerted to the vſe wherefore it was ordained, maie be ſaid to be loſt. For to this end was man borne, and had the benefit of time giuen him, that he might honor, ſerue, and loue his Creator, & thinke vpon his goodnes. For whatſoeuer is done without this is, doubtles caſt awaie.

End of mãs creation.

Oh, how can yee then excuſe your ſelues for the loſſe of time! do ye imagine that your careleſſe life ſhal neuer bee brought into queſtion. Thinke yee the wordes of *S. Paule* the Apoſtle are ſpoken in vaine, when he ſaith, *We muſt al appeare before the iudgment ſeate of Chriſt, that euerie man maie receiue the things which are done in his bodie, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or euil.* When that account ſhalbe taken, I feare me your reckoning wilbe to ſeeke.

2. Cor. 5, verſe. 10.

ſeeke.

But you ſaie, tuſh al is wel, can the Lord ſee this? wel, folowe the thoughtes of your owne harts, & ſee what ſhal come vpon you? yee ſhal find al your imaginations to be wicked; and though you flatter your ſelues in your ſinnes, tempt the Lord in his mercie, and pricke forward his ſlownes of wrath by your preſumption: yet he will ſtrike in the end to your vtter cō-

Eccl. 7, 19. fuſion. *Be thou not wicked ouermuch, neither be thou foolish; wherefore shouldeſt thou perish not in thy time,* ſaith Eccleſiaſtes godlie. And

Prou. 30, verſe. 32. Salomon, *If thou haſt bene foolish in lifting vp thy ſelfe, and if thou haſt thought wickedlie, laie thine hande vpon thy mouth.* ⋆ Againe, *Bleſſed is the man that feareth alwaie, but he that hardeneth his harte shal fal into euil.*

⋆ *Ceſſe from il doing.*

Prou. 28, verſe. 14.

What

What ſhal I ſaie? None but the wicked fauor iniquitie. The deſpiſers of GOD, looke where they take anie pleaſure, and find ſweetnes, there they hold them-ſelues, and feede their greedie humors; & it falleth out, as Salomon ſaith, that he who is throughlie an hungred, thinkes the meate which he eateth to be ſweete, although it be as bitter as wormewood.

Thoſe vnſauerie morſels of vnſeemelie ſentences paſsing out of the mouth of a ruffenlie plaier doth more content the hungrie humors of the rude multitude, and carieth better relliſh in their mouthes, than the bread of the worde, which is the foode of the ſoule.

They are alwaies eating, & neuer ſatiſfied; euer ſeeing, and neuer contented; continualie hearing, &

neuer wearied; they are greedie of wickednes, and will let no time, nor ſpare for anie weather (ſo great is their deuotion to make their pilgrimage) to offer their penie to the Diuel.

The nature of ſinne.

It is the nature of the wicked to finde alwaie ſuch ſweetenes in their miſdoings, as they wil neuer giue ouer, til they be ouerthrowen by Gods righteous iudgement, or reclamed by the ſecret working of his holie ſpirit.

Caluin vpon Iob, chap. 74.

Looke vpon an whore-maſter, if he be once chaſed with his owne luſt, the Diuel blindes him, and makes him take ſuch pleaſure in his wickednes, that al his delight is therein. If a mã be giuen to drõkennes, or to other wickednes, he wil hardlie be reclamed, or giue it ouer, ſo great ſweetenes doth he taſt in thoſe vnſeemelie pleaſures, if

if ſo I maie ſaie. Thus you maie ſee the deſpiſers of God do finde ſweetenes in al their miſdoings.

O my deere brethren, let not your affections carie you to wickednes; it behooueth you to be verie warie, and circumſpect how you thruſt your ſelues into publique aſſemblies of prophane plaies, ſince there be ſo manie inticements vnto looſenes, & ſo manie meanes to traine you to vnthriftines there, as wonder it is, if you haunt them but your ſoules wilbe grieuouſlie hurt.

Pleaſure their capitaine is ſo politique an enimie, that he knowes how to traine you into danger. But when ye are once within his lap, hard wil it be for you to eſcape. becauſe he can vſe you ſo freendlie, and ſo fitlie applie himſelfe to your appetites, that yee wil

rather wiſh to be in bondage with him, than at libertie without him. So that yee are warelie to ſhun his ambuſhes, and ſo to retire, that Satan be not able to endamage you anie kind of waie. And that you maie do it the better, it is meete that yee be made priuie to his ſubtile pollicies.

It was trulie ſaid of *Chryſoſtome*, that none is hurt but of himſelfe; no man hath ſo dangerous a foe, as that he caries about him. The ſnake in our boſome, which wee nuriſh with ſuch care, wil ſooneſt annoie vs. Let vs throwe awaie our fleſhlie minds, and bridle our affections. For if they maie haue the hed, they wil neuer leaue running til they haue ouerthrowen vs, and brought vs to a wretched ſtate.

In the beginning euerie diſeaſe

is

is to be ſtopped, and cured; but if a ſore run ouer-long it wil growe paſt the cure of the Phyſition.

Dutie of a Magiſtrate.

The Magiſtrate is therefore to prouide in time a remedie to redreſſe the miſchiefes that are like to enſue by this common plague. They which gouerne the ſtate are to trie, and decerne each cauſe, that they appeare not to deale vnaduiſedlie. They are to be diligent to finde out the truth of things; and when a matter is knowen of them to be euil, it is their part to reforme it; otherwiſe by negligence they ſhal run into the diſpleaſure of God.

Virtues of a Magiſtrate.

The Magiſtrates hart muſt be as the hart of a Lion. He is not to ſhrinke in the Lordes cauſe, or to ſtand in feare to reforme abuſes of the Common-weale, becauſe of ſome particular men of auctoritie.

He

He muſt haue both ſtoutnes, and conſtancie to repreſſe euil. And then doubtles the Lord wil bleſſe them in their enterpriſes. Let not therefore the interceſsion of the mightie mooue the Magiſtrate to ſtaie his ſworde from doing iuſtice on the wicked.

The parcialitie which is vſed in theſe daies for fauor, makes theſe yonkers to become bolder by reaſon of thoſe liberties which are granted them. They vphold themſelues by the countenance of their maiſters: as if their auctoritie were a warrant ſufficient for them to do euil, and to beare them out againſt good orders.

Let not the abuſe of the Sabboth proceede further and further, and in the meane while the iudge be a looker on, daring not for feare to reforme their diſorder til al be out

out of order. Alas, that priuate affection ſhould ſo raigne in the Nobilitie, that to pleaſure, as they thinke, their ſeruants, and to vphold them in their vanitie, they ſhould reſtraine the Magiſtrates from executing their office! what credite can returne to the Noble, to coũtenance his men to exerciſe that qualitie which is not ſufferable in anie Cõmon-weale? whereas it was an ancient cuſtome, that no man of Honor ſhould reteine anie man, but ſuch as was excellent in ſome one good qualitie or other, whereby if occaſion ſo ſerued, he might get his owne liuing? Then was euerie noble mãs houſe a Common-weale in it ſelfe: but ſince the reteining of theſe Caterpillers, the credite of Noble men hath decaied, & they are thought to be couetous by permitting their

A note for Noble-men.

ſeruants,

Plaiers bold beggers.

ſeruants, which cannot liue of thē-ſelues, and whome for neerenes they wil not maintaine, to liue at the deuotion or almes of other men, paſsing from countrie to countrie, from one Gentlemans houſe to another, offering their ſeruice, which is a kind of beggerie. Who in deede, to ſpeake more trulie, are become beggers for their ſeruants. For cōmonlie the good-wil men beare to their Lordes, makes them drawe the ſtringes of their purſes to extend their liberalitie to them; where otherwiſe they would not.

By ſuch infamous perſons much time is loſt; and manie daies of honeſt trauel are turned into vaine exerciſes. Wherein is learned nothing but abuſe; poore men liuing on their handie labor, are by them trained vnto vnthriftines; ſcholers

by

by their gaudes are allured from their ſtudies.

Thus the people are robbed; youth corrupted; the Sabboth prophaned; and of al theſe euils, who are counted the vpholders but the Noble, who of right ſhould eſtabliſh the lawe of the *Roman Traiane*, who commanded that no plaier, ieſter, nor iugler ſhould be admitted in his Common-weale to pick the purſes of his ſubiects, but that they ſhould either learne ſome occupation to mainteine themſelues in their owne houſes, or otherwiſe be baniſhed out of *Rome*. But now ſuch like men, vnder the title of their maiſters or as reteiners, are priuiledged to roaue abroad, and permitted to publiſh their mametree in euerie Temple of God, and that throughout England, vnto the horrible contempt of

Traiane the Emperor.

Temples prophaned with plaies.

of praier. So that now the Sanctuarie is become a plaiers ſtage, and a den of theeues and adulterers.

Why the Emp. Traiane ordained but 22. holie-daies throughout the yeere.

It was ordained in *Rome* by that aforeſaid Emperor, that the *Romans* ſhould obſerue but 22. holie-daies throughout the whole yeere. For he thought without al doubting, that the gods were more ſerued on ſuch daies as the *Romans* did labor, than on ſuch daies as they reſted: becauſe the vices were moe then which they did commit, than the ſacrifices they did offer.

God worſt ſerued on the Sabboth daies.

And truſt me I am of that opinion, that the Lord is neuer ſo ill ſerued as on the holie-daies. For then hel breakes loaſe. Then wee permit our youth to haue their ſwinge; and when they are out of the ſight of their maiſters, ſuch gouern-

gouernment haue they of themſelues, that what by il companie they meete withal, & il examples they learne at plaies, I feare me, I feare me their harts are more alienated in two houres from virtue, than againe maie wel be amended in a whole yeare.

But let vs leaue to ſpeake hereof, and returne we to the further abuſe of theſe plaies, which is in breach of the firſt Table of the cõmandements. Is it not expreſlie commanded of God in Deuteronomie, *That we should not take his Name in vaine, either by ſwearing raſhlie, or falſlie?* Are we not flatlie warned, if wee doe infringe the ſame, that he wil not hold vs giltles? yet how wel this commandement is kept at plaies, no man which reſortes to heare them, but can report. Deu.11,5.

How

The blasphemous speaches vsed at plaies.

How often is the sacred, and reuerend Name of God blasphemed on the stages, without regard of his iudgements! Is not he held the gallanteſt ruſler, that can rap out the moſt diſguiſed othes, to tempt the Lord withal! As who ſhould ſaie, it were allowable to ſweare, ſo it were done couertlie. As if it were none offence to reſemble the wicked; and that to diſſemble were commendable.

Matth. 5, verſe. 34.

Chriſt hath willed vs not to ſweare at al, but theſe felowes thinke they maie iugle with God, as they do with the world. Therefore to verefie their falſe-hoodes they take the names of *Iupiter, Saturne, Iuno*, & ſuch like prophane Gods, as they are called, and Goddeſſes of the Gentils, and that they thinke they maie doe lawfulie. But, if that be not lawful which by the

the Scripture is not warranted, I dare auar that that ſwearing is as odious as the other; and as plainlie forbidden by the worde of God. As we maie read in *Exodus*; where among other things that God ſetteth downe for the Iſraelits to do, he giueth this vnto them as a principal charge, that they make no mention of the names of other Gods; that they open not their lips to ſpeake of them; or to ſweare by them, or otherwiſe. And herevpon *Dauid* ſaith, *That the ſorowes of them which offer to another GOD ſhalbe multiplied, their offerings of bloud*, ſaith he, *wil I not offer, neither make mention of their names with my lips.*

Exod. 23, verſe. 13.

Pſal. 16, 4.

How then can theſe men excuſe them-ſelues, that they haue not offered this ſacrifice of bloud! when they not onelie name thoſe prophane

Plaiers open idolaters.

prophane gods in their mouthes, and take them as witneſſes of their falſhood, ſhal wee not ſaie they haue conſented to idolatrie? I refer their cauſe to be conſidered of the learned, my ſelf maie not paſſe beyond my latchet: but this much I dare affirme, that theſe men which dallie with God with their blaſphemous ſwearings, are not out of the danger of his indignation, and without repentance ſhal be no partakers of Chriſt, nor of his merites.

For al their othes what are they but open reprothes againſt the Name of God? When theſe men ſweare, as they ſweare at aduenture, doth it not declare that they regard not the Name of GOD, which ought to be holden holie in our ſight? *Who ſo ſweareth vainlie by the Name of the Lord, defileth it.*

Leuit. 19, verſe. 12.

The

The Iſraelitiſh womans ſonne for blaſpheming the Name of the Lord, was ſtoned to death. Leuit. 24, verſe. 10. 11, &c.

How is it, my deere brethren, that we can heare the Name of the Lord vttered from the mouth of theſe blaſphemers, without caſting downe our heads, and acknowleging his infinite maieſtie! How is it that we can heare, without ſtopping our eares, ſo manie counterfet othes vttered of plaiers! which, as light as they ſeeme in our eies, are great reproches, and iniuries to the Maieſtie of GOD. Wherevnto yee are acceſſarie, inaſmuch as yee can vouchſafe to heare them without ſcruple of cõſcience. But it appeareth yee haue litle conſcience, and therefore be ſo litle moued. *Who can heare plaies and not abhor them.* *Hearers of plaies are acceſſarie to the wickednes of plaiers.*

Others there be which flatter themſelues in euil, accõpting that pretious *Defenders of plaies.*

pretious which is moſt prophane. They wil ſtand in contention, and defend the cauſe of the wicked, yea they haue prepared argumẽts againſt Gods children; ſo ſmal power haue they to withſtand the fancies which the diuel putteth into their heads. Wel, let theſe men make their arguments, as ſure as they can, though they haue an hundred replies in the defence of the wicked, yea, and ſuch as maie ſeeme to carie good likelihood for the maintenance of their cauſe: yet ſhal they be as nothing, but fal to the earth, when the iudge of the cauſe ſhal argue againſt them. What ſhal I ſaie? wickednes ſo encreaſeth, and groweth more and more to ripenes, when men giue it ſcope, & ſeeke not to redreſſe it in conuenient time. When the wicked are ſuffered and not repreſſed,

A note of Magiſtrats.

we

we muſt needs ſaie the Magiſtrate is a cauſe of ſuch miſbehauior. Sixe ſcore yeeres before the floud, the world did ſo exceede in voluptuouſnes and pleaſure, as if the Lord had left to take the charge of men: but whileſt they liued ſo at pleaſure & eaſe, their arrainement was preparing in heauen; & when their ſinne was ripe, the Lord pronounced iudgement againſt thoſe wicked liuers; rained from heauen, & made a general ſubmerſion of the whole worlde. I cannot otherwiſe think, but that the wrath of God hanges ouer vs, and that our arrainment is alredie drawen: we lacke but our iudgment, which can pronounce nothing but death and damnation, the ſinnes of al men are ſo greeuous.

If we would conſider the ſhortnes of our life, which with the tur-

ning of an hande maie be cut off, we could not be ſo careles of our ſelues. But the pleaſures of this life ſo beguile vs,& drawe vs from the cõſideration of our eſtate, that we are vtterlie vnmindful of our duties, and forgetful of God, and his worde. But let vs not thinke that God in ſparing vs of his mercie, doth giue libertie for to ſinne; as though we might do wickedlie becauſe we are vnpuniſhed. Oh let vs not delaie our amendment til he ſmite, but rather with the repenting Niniuites aduiſedlie preuent his iudgements: otherwiſe, when we ſhal ſaie like reprobates,

1. Theſſ. 5, verſe. 3. *Peace, and ſalfetie, then shal come vpon vs ſudden deſtruction.*

Alas that we ſhould ſo vnmeaſurablie folowe thoſe vanities, which God condemneth. Thoſe pleaſures of the ſtage, what are they,

they, but the drifts of Satan, which he vſeth to blind our eies withal, the more eaſilie to carie vs from the obedience of GOD! Such knacks from time to time he hath ſet vp, and men haue willinglie followed that which they haue liked of, and which the pleaſure of the fleſh hath drawen them vnto. Yea now adaies we ſee manie that onlie ſeeke after thoſe vaine delights, counting no time wel ſpent, but that they conſume in beholding of gaudes.

And albe theſe paſtimes were not (as they are) to be condemned ſimplie of their owne nature: yet becauſe they are ſo abuſed they are abhominable. For the foole no ſooner ſhoweth himſelfe in his colors to make men merrie, but ſtraight-waie lightlie there followeth ſome vanitie, not onlie ſuper-

fluous, but beaſtlie and wicked.

Yet are we ſo caried awaie with his vnſeemelie geſture, and vnreuerend ſcorning, that wee ſeeme onelie to be delighted in him; and are not content to ſport our ſelues with modeſt mirth, as the matter giues occaſion, vnles it be intermixed with knauerie, dronken merie-ments, craftie cooſenings, vndecent iuglings, clowniſh conceites,& ſuch other curſed mirth, as is both odious in the ſight of God,& offenſiue to honeſt eares, being forbidden by S.Paule in his epiſtle vnto the Epheſians, where he willeth vs expreſlie, that *Neither filthines, neither foolish talking, nor ieſting, which are things not comelie, should be once named among vs*. Al which things wee now count but light ſinnes (ſo blinde we are, and ſo far paſt our ſelues,

Epheſ.5,3.4.

ſelues,& the knowledge of God.)

No zelous hart but muſt needs bleed,to ſee how manie Chriſtian ſoules are there ſwalowed vp in the whirle-poole of diueliſh impudencie. Whoſoeuer ſhal viſit the chappel of Satan, I meane the Theater, ſhal finde there no want of yong ruffins, nor lacke of harlots, vtterlie paſt al ſhame: who preſſe to the fore-frunt of the ſcaffoldes, to the end to ſhowe their impudencie,and to be as an obiect to al mens eies. Yea, ſuch is their open ſhameles behauior,as euerie man maie perceaue by their wanton geſtures, wherevnto they are giuen: yea,they ſeeme there to be like brothels of the ſtewes. For often without reſpect of the place, and companie which behold them they commit that filthines openlie,which is horrible to be done in ſecret;

Theaters the chappels of Satan.

The open wickednes of harlots at plaies.

ſecret; as if whatſoeuer they did, were warranted. For neither reuerence, iuſtice, nor anie thing beſide can gouerne them.

An admonition to Magiſtrats.

Alas, that youth ſhould become ſo diueliſh, and voide of the feare of God. Let Magiſtrates aſſure themſelues, that without ſpeedie redreſſe al things wil growe ſo far out of order, as they wilbe paſt remedie. Shamefaſtnes, & modeſtie is quite baniſhed from yong men: they are vtterlie ſhameles, ſtubborne, and impudent.

It was wel ſaid of Caluine, that a man ſetled in euil, wil make but a ſcof of religion. He preacheth in vaine, that preacheth vnto the deafe. Tel manie of theſe men of the Scripture, they wil ſcof, and turne it vnto a ieſt. Rebuke them for breaking the Sabboth day, they wil ſaie, you are a man of the Sabboth,

both, you are verie preciſe; you wil allowe vs nothing; you wil haue nothing but the worde of God; you wil permit vs no recreation, but haue men like Aſſes, who neuer reſt but when they are eating.

Seeke to withdrawe theſe felowes from the Theater vnto the ſermon, they wil ſaie, By the preacher they maie be edified, but by the plaier both edified and delighted. So that in them the ſaieng of S. Paule is verified, where he ſaith, that *The wiſedome of the flesh is nothing but enimitie againſt GOD.* Rom. 8, 7. How ſmal heede take they of thẽſelues, which ſuffer their owne wicked affections to withdrawe them from God, and his worde. We neede not voluntarilie ſeeke our owne deſtruction. For he that is virtuouſlie diſpoſed, ſhal finde lewde perſons enough to withdrawe

drawe him from wel doing by the promiſe of pleaſure, and delightful paſtime, wherevnto we are naturalie inclined, vnto the Schoole-houſe of Satan, and chappel of il counſel, where he ſhal ſee ſo much iniquitie, & loaſenes; and ſo great outrage and ſcope of ſinne, that it is a wonder, if he returne not either wounded in conſcience, or changed in life.

Theaters the ſchoole-houſe of Satan, and chappels of il counſel.

I would wiſh therefore al maiſters, not onlie to withdraw themſelues, but their ſeruants alſo frō ſuch wicked aſſemblies. For it is alwaies wiſedome to ſhun the occaſions of euil.

Counſel to maiſters.

Youth wilbe withdrawen by companie, if they be not reſtrained of their libertie. They neede not to ſeeke out for ſchoole-maſters, they can learne euil too faſt of them-ſelues, and are pregnant enough

enough at home to learne vnhappines. Manie of nature honeſt, and tractable, haue bene altered by thoſe ſhowes and ſpectacles, and become monſterous. Mans minde, which of it ſelfe is proane vnto vice, is not to be pricked forward ynto wantonnes, but bridled: if it be left vnto it ſelfe, it hardlie ſtandeth; if it be driuen forth, it runneth headlong.

Flee far from Babylon, yee that carrie the Lordes veſſels. Forſomuch as yee are baptized into Chriſt, it ſtandeth you vpō to be holie both of bodie and minde, & to dedicate your ſelues to his ſeruice, which yee ſhal neuer do, vnles ye withdraw your ſelues from the inticements of vanitie, and eſchue the occaſions of euil, which that yee maie the better do, yee are to faſten your eies vpon God, by whome Rom. 6, 3.

whome we are ſanctified.

Il examples to be ſhunned.

Let not the examples of the wicked be a preſident vnto vs; neither let vs be drawen away to euil with the multitude. Cuſtome ſhal but make vs bold in ſin, and the companie of ſcorners make vs more impudent, and diſordered of life.

It is not enough for vs to excuſe our ſelues by the doings of other men; it wil not be taken for an excuſe, although we could alleage that euerie man doth as wee doe. For it is no meanes to acquite vs before God, to ſaie that other be no better than our ſelues. I would rather wiſh that the euil conuerſation of others might be an occaſion to drawe vs backe; leaſt perhaps we be wrapped in the vices that raigne in al the wicked, and ſo be partakers of the puniſhment due to them. For we are not to walke

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as men that looke but onlie vpon the creatures, but our part is to ſet God before our eies, whoſe preſence we cannot poſsiblie eſcape.

It is maruelous to conſider how the geſturing of a plaier, which *Tullie* termeth the eloquence of the bodie, is of force to moue, and prepare a man to that which is il. For ſuch thinges be diſcloſed to the eie, and to the eare, as might a great deale better be kept cloſe. Whereby a double offence is committed; firſt by thoſe diſſolute plaiers, which without regard of honeſtie, are not aſhamed to exhibite the filthieſt matters they can deuiſe to the ſight of men: ſecondly by the beholders, which vouchſalfe to neare and behold ſuch filthie things, to the great loſſe both of themſelues and the time. There cõmeth much euil in at the eares, but *Motion of the bodie.*

but more at the eies, by theſe two open windowes death breaketh into the ſoule. Nothing entereth in more effectualie into the memorie, than that which commeth by ſeeing; things heard do lightlie paſſe awaie, but the tokens of that which wee haue ſeene, ſaith *Petrarch*, ſticke faſt in vs whether we wil or no: and yet they enter not into vs, vnles we be willing, except verie ſeldome.

Alack what violence carieth vs awaie, to be merie an hower, and alwaies after to be ſad; to ſee that at one time, which a thouſande times after wee ſhal rue that euer we ſawe it!

Manie haue ben intangled with the webs of theſe Spiders, who would gladlie haue bene at libertie when they could not. The webs are ſo ſubtillie ſpun, that there

there is no man that is once within them, that can auoide them without danger. None can come within thoſe ſnares that maie eſcape vntaken, be ſhe maide, matrone, or whatſoeuer; ſuch force haue their inchantements of pleaſure to drawe the affections of the mind. *Snares of plaies.*

This inward fight hath vanquiſhed the chaſtitie of manie women; ſome by taking pittie on the deceitful teares of the ſtage louers, haue bene mooued by their complaint to rue on their ſecret frends, whome they haue thought to haue taſted like torment; ſome hauing noted the enſamples how maidens reſtrained from the marriage of thoſe whome their frends haue miſliked, haue there learned a policie to preuent their parents, by ſtealing them awaie; ſome ſeeing

ing by enſample of the ſtage plaier one carried with too much liking of an other mans wife, hauing noted by what practiſe ſhe hath bene aſſailed and ouertaken, haue not failed to put the like in effect in earneſt, that was afore ſhowen in ieſt.

The wilines & craft of the ſtage is not yet ſo great, as is without on the ſcaffoldes. For that they which are euil diſpoſed, no ſooner heare anie thing ſpoken that maie ſerue their turne, but they applie it vnto themſelues. Alas, ſaie they to their familiar by them, Gentlewoman, is it not pittie this paſsioned louer ſhould be ſo martyred. And if he finde her inclining to fooliſh pittie, as commonlie ſuch women are, then he applies the matter to himſelfe, and ſaies that he is likewiſe caried awaie with

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the liking of her; crauing that pittie to be extended vpō him, as ſhe ſeemed to ſhowe toward the afflicted amorous ſtager.

Theſe running headed louers are growen ſo perfect ſcholers by long continuance at this ſchoole, that there is almoſt no worde ſpoken, but they can make matter of it to ſerue their turne. They can ſo ſurelie diſcouer the conceits of the minde, and ſo cunninglie handle themſelues; & are growen ſo ſubtile in working their matters, that neither the ieloſie of *Iuno*, who ſuſpecteth al things; nor the ſtreight keeping of *Danaes* maie debar; nor the watchfulnes of *Argoes* with his hundred eies eſpie.

Credite me, there can be found out no ſtronger engine to batter the honeſtie as wel of wedded wiues, as the chaſtitie of vnmar-

Flie Theaters you that would be honeſt.

ried

ried maides and widowes, than are the hearing of common plaies. There wanton wiues fables, and paſtorical ſonges of loue, which they vſe in their comical diſcourſes (al which are taken out of the ſecret armorie of *Venus*, & practiſing bawderie) turne al chaſtitie vpſide downe, & corrupt the good diſpoſition & manners of youth, inſomuch that it is a miracle, if there be foūd anie either woman, or maide, which with theſe ſpectacles of ſtrange luſt, is not oftentimes inflamed euen vnto furie.

The nature of their Comedies are, for the moſt part, after one manner of nature, like the tragical Comedie of *Caliſtus*; where the bawdreſſe *Sceleſtina* inflamed the maiden *Melibeia* with her ſorceries. Do wee not vſe in theſe diſcourſes to counterfet witchcraft, charmed

charmed drinkes, & amorous potions, thereby to drawe the affections of men, & to ſtir them vp vnto luſt, to like euen thoſe whome of them-ſelues they abhor. The enſamples whereof ſtirre vp the ignorant multitude to ſeeke by ſuch vnlawful meanes the loue, & goodwil of others.

A ſtrange example.

I can tel you a ſtorie of like practiſe vſed of late by a ielous wife to her huſband, whoſe hart being, as ſhe thought, eſtranged otherwiſe than of cuſtome, did practiſe with a ſorcereſſe to haue ſome powder, which might haue force to renew her huſbandes wonted goodwil towardes her: but it had ſuch a virtue in the operation, as it wel nigh brought him his bane: for his memorie therby was gone: ſo that if God had not dealt miraculouſlie with him, by reuealing

it, it had coſt him his life. The like we read of *Lucullus* and *Lucretius*, who by drinking ſuch amorous confections loſt firſt their wits, & afterward their liues.

The deuiſe of carrieng and recarrieng letters by landreſſes, practiſing with pedlers to tranſport their tokens by colorable meanes, to ſel their marchandiſe, and other kind of policies to beguile fathers of their children, huſbands of their wiues, gardens of their wardes, and maiſters of their ſeruants, is it not aptlie taught in the Schoole of abuſe*? But huſh no more.

* *He meaneth plaies, who are not vnfitlie ſo called.*

I am ſorie this ſchoole is not pluckt downe by the Magiſtrate; and the ſchoole-maſters baniſhed this citie. ⋆ Thus much I wil tel them, if they ſuffer theſe brothel houſes to continue, or do in anie wiſe

* *London.*

wiſe allowe them, the Lord wil ſaie vnto them, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *If thou ſawest a theefe thou wentest with him, and haddeſt thy part with adulterers; thou haſt done theſe things, and becauſe I haue held my peace, thou haſt beleeued, wicked man, that I am like vnto thee, but I wil accuſe thee, &c.*

The reuerend word of God, & hiſtories of the Bible ſet forth on the ſtage by theſe blaſphemous plaiers, are ſo corrupted with their geſtures of ſcurrilitie, and ſo interlaced with vncleane, and whoriſh ſpeeches, that it is not poſsible to drawe anie profite out of the doctrine of their ſpiritual moralities. For that they exhibite vnder laughing that which ought to be taught and receiued reuerendlie. So that their auditorie maie returne madde merie in minde, but

none comes awaie reformed in manners. And of al abuſes this is moſt vndecent and intollerable, to ſuffer holie things to be handled by men ſo prophane, and defiled by interpoſitiō of diſſolute words.

Againſt Auctors of plaies.

The writers of our time are ſo led awaie with vaineglorie, that their onlie endeuor is to pleaſure the humor of men; & rather with vanitie to content their mindes, than to profit them with good enſample. The notableſt lier is become the beſt Poet; he that can make the moſt notorious lie, and diſguiſe falſhood in ſuch ſort, that he maie paſſe vnperceaued, is held the beſt writer. For the ſtrangeſt Comedie brings greateſt delectation, and pleaſure. Our nature is led awaie with vanitie, which the auctor perceauing frames himſelf with noueltie and ſtrange trifles

to

to content the vaine humors of his rude auditors, faining countries neuer heard of; monſters and prodigious creatures that are not: as of the Arimaſpie, of the Grips, the Pigmeies, the Cranes, & other ſuch notorious lies. And if they write of hiſtories that are knowen, as the life of *Pompeie*; the martial affaires of *Cæſar*, and other worthies, they giue them a newe face, and turne them out like counterfeites to ſhowe themſelues on the ſtage. It was therefore aptlie applied of him, who likened the writers of our daies vnto Tailors, who hauing their ſheers in their hand, can alter the facion of anie thing into another forme; & with a new face make that ſeeme new which is old. The ſhreds of whoſe curioſitie our Hiſtorians haue now ſtolen from them, being by practiſe become

Writers of theſe daies.

become as cunning as the Tailor to ſet a new vpper-bodie to an old coate; and a patch of their owne to a peece of anothers.

The beſt thing at plaies is ſtarke naught.

So that yee ſhal find in al their writings three differences, manie things good, manie things indifferent, and manie ſtarke naught: but by reaſon that thing which is good is applied vnto il purpoſe, & mixed with euil, the good hath changed propertie, and is become of the nature of the bad. Otherwiſe goodnes & badnes, being two cõtraries, cannot be made to agree together. And therefore there can be no difference of choice, but al muſt be euil: becauſe it is generallie il applied, and by altering propertie, hath changed his nature. Yet neuertheles that it keepeth his virtue, of being good, and reduced to his proper ſubſtance.

I

I do not denie, but that writers inal their workes maie be pleaſant, ſo far forth as they be profitable, and ſwarue not from honeſtie, and therein deſerue commendation. But what praiſe maie they deſerue who ſet forth thoſe works which are vaine and naught, and conteine in them no matter of good example, who write of thoſe things, which may corrupt the life of men, thereby making them worſe by ten to one, than they were before they heard them?

What doe they leaue behind them? monumentes of wanton wicked life, and doting things for men of theſe latter daies. O Lord, how do thoſe wanton wordes of theirs intice vnto wicked life, and with a poiſoned baite allure men to ſinne! Their wanton ſpeeches do pearſe our ſecret thoughts, and moue

moue vs thereby vnto miſchiefe, and prouoke our members to vncleannes.

An Obiection. But ſome perhaps wil ſaie, The Noble man delighteth in ſuch things, whoſe humors muſt be contented, partlie for feare, & partlie for commoditie: and if they write matters pleaſant, they are beſt preferred in court among the cunning heads.

Anſwere. Cunning heads, whoſe wits are neuer wel exerciſed, but in the practiſe of ſuch exploits! But are thoſe things to be ſuffered and praiſed, becauſe they pleaſe the rich, and content the Noble man, that alwaies liues in eaſe? not ſo. A two legged Aſſe maie be clothed in gold, a man of honor maie be corrupt of iudgement, though by his auctoritie he maie ſeeme wiſer than *Socrates*, whome *Phœbus* for wiſedome

wiſedome iudged to beare the bel. Thoſe goodlie perſons, if they be voide of virtue, maie wel be counted like faire clothes ouer a foule wal; big bladers ful of wind, yet of no waight. Where wealth is abundant, pleaſure is preſent: pleaſure bringeth folie into eſtimation; and thereby the light of reaſon is vtterlie extinguiſhed.

Writers for reward.

Who writeth for reward, neither regardeth virtue, nor truth; but runs vnto falſhood, becauſe he flattereth for commoditie. Neede and flatterie are two brothers, and the eldeſt ſeruitors in the Court: they were both ſcholers vnto *Ariſtippus*, and learned both of them to applie themſelues to the time, & their matter to the diſpoſition? No maruel then though none can pleaſe *Dionyſius* but *Ariſtippus*, nor anie the courtier but the flatterer.

The

Conditions of the world-lie rich.

The rich that followeth the pleaſures of this life, maie not abide to be reformed, or to be drawen away from his deſires, be they neuer ſo wicked and vnſeemelie. Talke to him of amendement, he wil ſaie, he is not dieng. He that reprehends him, is a Preacher; he that ſooths him, is a Saint. Who meddels with nettles cannot paſſe vnſtinged: and he that deales with men of auctoritie otherwiſe than maie like them, cannot ſcape from his danger without hurt. I maie not ſtaie longer on this point.

Againſt training vp of boies to plaies.

As I haue had a ſaieng to theſe verſi-fieng Plaie-makers: ſo muſt I likewiſe deale with ſhameles inactors. When I ſee by them yong boies, inclining of themſelues vnto wickednes, trained vp in filthie ſpeeches, vnnatural and vnſeemelie geſtures, to be brought vp by theſe

theſe Schoole-maſters in bawderie, and in idlenes, I cannot chuſe bnt with teares and griefe of hart lament.

O with what delight can the father behold his ſonne bereft of ſhamefaſtnes, & trained vp to impudencie! How proane are they of themſelues, and apt to receiue inſtruction of their lewde teachers, which are the Schoolemaſters of ſinne in the ſchoole of abuſe! what do they teach them, I praie you, but to foſter miſchiefe in their youth, that it maie alwaies abide in them, and in their age bring them ſooner vnto hel?

Plaiers, the ſchoolemaiſters of ſin, in the ſchoole of abuſe.

And as for thoſe ſtagers themſelues, are they not commonlie ſuch kind of men in their conuerſation, as they are in profeſsion? Are they not as variable in hart, as they are in their partes? are they not

Diſpoſition of plaiers for the moſt part.

Plaiers can not better be compared than to the Camelion.

not as good practiſers of Bawderie, as inactors? Liue they not in ſuch ſort themſelues, as they giue precepts vnto others? doth not their talke on the ſtage declare the nature of their diſpoſition? doth not euerie one take that part which is proper to his kind? doth not the Plough-mans tong walke of his plough; the Sea-faring man of his maſt, cable, and ſaile; the Soldier of his harnes, ſpeare, and ſhield; & bawdie mates of bawdie matters? Aſke them, if in their laieng out of their partes, they chooſe not thoſe partes which is moſt agreeing to their inclination, and that they can beſt diſcharge? And looke what euerie of them doth moſt delight in, that he can beſt handle to the contentment of others. If it be a roiſting, bawdie, and laſciuious part, wherein are vnſeemelie ſpeeches,

ſpeeches, & that they make choiſe of them as beſt anſwering, & proper to their manner of plaie: maie we not ſaie, by how much he exceedes in his geſture, he delightes himſelfe in his part? & by ſo much it is pleaſing to his diſpoſition and nature? If (it be his nature) to be a bawdie plaier, and he delight in ſuch filthie & curſed actions, ſhal we not thinke him in his life to be more diſordered, and to abhor virtue?

But they perhaps wil ſaie, that ſuch abuſes as are handled on the ſtage, others by their examples, are warned to beware of ſuch euils, to amendment. *An Obiection.*

In deed if their auctoritie were greater than the wordes of the Scripture; or their zeale of more force than of the preacher, I might eaſilie be perſuaded to thinke, that men *Anſwere.*

men by them might be called vnto good life. But when I see the word of truth proceeding from the hart, and vttered by the mouth of the reuerend preachers, to be receaued of the most part into the eare, and but of a fewe rooted in the hart: I cannot by anie means beleeue that the wordes proceeding from a prophane plaier, and vttered in scorning sort, interlaced with filthie, lewde, & vngodlie speeches, haue greater force to mooue men vnto virtue, than the wordes of truth vttered by the godlie Preacher, whose zeale is such as that of Moses, who was contented to be raced out of the booke of life; and of Paule, who wished to be separated from Christ for the welfare of his brethren. If the good life of a man be a better instruction to repentãce than the tong, or words, why do

Exo. 32, 32

Rom. 9, 3.

do not plaiers, I beſeech you, leaue examples of goodnes to their poſteritie ? But which of them is ſo zealous, or ſo tendereth his owne ſaluatiõ, that he doth amend himſelfe in thoſe pointes, which, as they ſaie, others ſhould take heede of ? Are they not notoriouſlie knowen to be thoſe men in their life abroade, as they are on the ſtage, roiſters, brallers, il-dealers, boſters, louers, loiterers, ruffins ? So that they are alwaies exerciſed in plaieng their parts ; and practiſing wickednes ; making that an art, to the end they might the better geſture it in their partes. For who can better plaie the ruffin thã a verie ruffin ? who better the louer, than they who make it a common exerciſe ? To conclude, the principal end of all their interludes is to feede the world with ſights,

Chiefe end of plaies.

ſights, & fond paſtimes; to iuggle in good earneſt the monie out of other mens purſes into their owne hands.

Plaiers infamous perſons.

What ſhal I ſaie? They are infamous men; and in *Rome* were

Plaiers baniſhed out of Rome.

thought worthie to be expelled, albe there was libertie enough to take pleaſure.

In the primatiue Church plaiers kept from the Communion.

In the primatiue Church they were kept out from the Communion of Chriſtians, and neuer remitted til they had perfourmed publike penance. And thervpon S. *Cyprian* in a certaine Epiſtle counſeleth a Biſhop; not to receiue a plaier into the penſion of the Church, by which they were noriſhed, til there was an expreſſe act of penance with proteſtation to renounce an art ſo infamous. And thus much for thoſe plaiers.

Obiection.

Some haue obiected, that by theſe

theſe publique plaies manie forbeare to do euil for feare to be publiquelie reprehended. And for that cauſe they wil ſaie it was tolerated in *Rome*, wherein Emperors were touched, though they were preſent.

But to ſuch it maie be anſwered, firſt that in diſguiſed plaiers giuen ouer to al ſortes of diſſolutenes, is not found ſo much as a wil to do good, ſeing they care for nothing leſſe than for virtue. Secondlie, that is not a good meanes to correct ſinne. For that if it be ſecret, it ought not to be reuealed openlie, but by ſuch meanes to be reformed as Chriſt himſelfe alloweth in his Goſpel. *If*, ſaith he, *thy brother treſpaſſe againſt thee*, ſpeaking of thoſe ſecret & particular ſinnes, which are not open, and made knowen

Anſwere.

Matth. 18, verſe. 15.

to others, *go and tel him his faults betweene thee and him alone; if he heare thee, thou hast wonne thy brother. But if he heare thee not, take yet with thee one or two, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses euerie worde maie be confirmed. And if he wil not vouchsafe to heare them, tel it vnto the Church:* (which is, to those ancient & expert men of the Iewes which were appointed to reforme manners, and execute discipline. For those assemblies of ancient Fathers did represent the Church; because they had the charge thereof appointed vnto them) *and if he refuse to heare the Church also, let him be vnto thee as an Heathen man, and a Publicane.*

Matth. 18, verse. 16. 17.

You see then that euerie fault being priuatelie knowen is to be kept

kept ſecret, and not to be openlie vttered to the defamation of the offender. And that on the other-ſide, if it be a matter openlie knowen, it is to be put to the reprehenſion of the Magiſtrate, and not of the plaier, whoſe reprehenſion is as vnreuerend, and odious, as the reprehenſion of a Magiſtrate is decent, and commendable.

An obiection answered.

The antiquitie of plaieng is likewiſe often vſed for an argument to proue it allowable. But the cuſtome of euil is not to be maintained, becauſe of antiquitie. Gods truth is not to be oppreſſed vnder that color, what examples of antiquitie ſoeuer do ſerue to maintaine wickednes, I am not bounde to allowe of them, or to maintaine them. For my part I diſallowe al thoſe an-

Againſt the antiquitie of plaies.

tiquities which are contrarie to the Scriptures. Thoſe ſpectacles were vſed of the Gentils to the ſetting vp of idolatrie, and to the honor of their falſe gods: as *Peſa* and *Elis*. Such games were exerciſed in the honor of *Iupiter* worſhipped on the hil *Olympus*. *Theſeus* ordained in the ſtraightes of *Corinth* the *Iſthemian* games in the honor of *Neptune*. There were alſo *Pythij ludi*, *Ludi funebres*, *Lupercalia*, *Saturnalia*, and *Circenſes ludi*, and manie other deuiſed as wel by *Romans* as *Greckes* to the great charges of their Cõmon-weales. The exerciſe whereof was both bloudie and beaſtlie, and yet among them ſufferable and allowed.

Notwithſtanding, theſe are not examples vnto Chriſtians to allowe

allowe that for good, which was ſufferable among them. For then one might ſlaie another; one might wound another; then ſhould we encounter with wild beaſtes; our hartes ſhould then delight in ſhedding bloud; and be al giltie of the death of the murdered.

As for the plaiers in theſe daies which exhibite their games for lucre ſake, as did thoſe two Romans *Eſopus*, and *Aroſſus*, who ſhowed their wonderful cunning on the ſtage to gather welth and ſubſtance; they are of the moſt part of men either of auctoritie, or learning held for vagabondes, & infamous perſons; they maie aptlie be likened vnto droanes, which wil not labor to bring in, but liue of the labors of the paineful gatherers. They are

The accõpt which good men haue of our cõmon gameſters, and plaiers.

are therefore to be thruſt out of the Bee-hiue of a Chriſtian Common-weale.

This vnhoneſt trade of gaine, hath driuen manie from their occupations, in hope of eaſier thrift. What ſucceſſe they haue had, ſome of them haue reported, finding the Prouerbe true, that, *Il gotten goodes are il ſpent.*

Would to God London would followe the example of Marſiles.

The citie *Marſiles*, as *Valerian* writeth, kept ſo great grauitie, that it would receaue into it no ſtage-plaiers: becauſe their arguments, for the moſt parte, contained the actes and doinges of harlots; to the end that the cuſtome of beholding ſuch things might not alſo cauſe a licence of folowing them. I would to God the Magiſtrates of our citie of London would haue the like foreſight. The permiſsion of plaies

Harke Magiſtrates of London.

plaies ſo long a time hath alreadie corrupted this citie; and brought the Name of the citizens into ſlander: the examples of Gods iudgement is at this preſent an example in this citie. The ſinne of whoredome being winked at by the children of *Beniamin*, they were puniſhed by the deſtructiõ of their whole tribe. If we ſlacke to puniſh offenders, and giue our ſelues to maintaine the wicked in their lewdenes, wee are to looke for none other than a general confuſion. For the Lord himſelfe wil take part againſt the wicked to deſtroie them. They maie be wel let alone for a time, but yet that which is deferred wil one daie come.

London defamed thoroughplaies there vſed.

Iudges.19, verſe. 1. 2,&c.

In the raigne of *Tiberius* the Emperor, the Lorde by ouer-

throwing

A worthie example of Gods iuſtice vpon a play houſe, or Theater.

throwing the Amphitheater in the citie of *Tidena* ſlew 20. thouſand of the beholders. A notable example of Gods iuſtice. For notable offenders he appointeth ſtrange & notable puniſhments:

Wiſd. 11, verſe. 13. *And looke wherewith a man ſinneth, by the ſame alſo ſhal he be punished.*

The concluſion.

Wherfore, my deere brethren, leaue theſe *Cretan* liers with their wicked inuentions: *Do not*

Prou. 24, 1 Rom. 12, 2. *companie with the wicked; facion not your ſelues like vnto this world; but be ye changed by the renuing of your mind, that ye maie proue what is the good wil of God, and acceptable, and perfect; eſchew*

Pſa. 34, 14. 1. Pet. 3, 11 *euil and do good. He that ſhal*

Prou. 24. verſe. 24. *ſaie to the wicked, Thou art righteuous, him ſhal the people curſſe, and*

20. *the multitude ſhal abhor him. For the Lord is far from the wicked;*

their

their houſe shalbe deſtroied, there shalbe none end of their plagues, their light shalbe put out. Yeelde not your ſelues to them, leſt ye periſh in their wickednes; yeeld not your ſelues to thoſe vaine pleaſures and delights. For yee ſhal find nothing more hurtful, nor preiudicial to your ſoules; they depriue you of al good cogitations; enimies they are vnto virtue; increaſers of wickednes; the nurſes of al vice; the corrupters of manners; the ſubuerters of religion; and ſo bring at the end vnto euerlaſting ſorowes and gnaſhing of teeth in the pit of hel.

The Lord of his infinite mercie looke vpon vs, and direct vs with his holie ſpirit; and ſo order our liues, that wee maie be holie and acceptable in his ſight.

The

The Lord open our eies, that we maie ſee our ſinne, and loath it in our ſelues, repreſſe it in the wicked, and condemne it in our Common-weale. Lord increaſe our deuotion, that our hartes maie be made zelous to heare the word of God, *which is a lanterne vnto our feete, and a light vnto our pathes.*

Preſerue this Church of England; increaſe thy flocke vniuerſal; be a ſafegard vnto vs againſt the force of our enimies, for our truſt is in thee.

Bleſſe our worthie Princeſſe, & renowmed ſoueraigne Queene *ELIZABETH*, and eſtabliſh her ſtate, as the ſeate of *Dauid*; let thy ſpirit direct her doings in al things; that ſhe maie be as the zelous *Ioſias* to vphold the ſtate of the true Church; to roote out

out superstition and idolatrie; that she maie be as a continual enimie to the enimies of thy truth. Be thou, ô Lord, her supporter, that thou by her maist defend thine owne cause.

Merciful God, inspire her honorable Counsel with the wisedome of *Salomon*, that their counsel maie be wise and good; and their harts linked vnseparablie together to the preseruation of her state, and the welfare of this land.

Lord strengthen the hand of Iustice against the wicked, that our Magistrates maie roote out the memorial of wickednes from the earth, that our Realme maie florish, & our liues be as a lampe on a mountaine, to giue light vnto other nations how to direct their liues after our good ex-

example.

Performe al wantes, O God, in thy Church; increase our faith and loue towards thee; continue thy Gospel among vs for thy deere Sonnes sake Iesus Christ, to whome with thee, and the holie Ghost, be al honor and glorie, worlde without ende, Amen.

Ephes. 5, 13.

Al things, when they are repreoued of the light, are manifest. For it is light that maketh al things manifest.

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